



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



La 9.524



Harvard College Library

THE GIFT OF

STEPHEN SALISBURY,

OF WORCESTER, MASS.

(Class of 1817.)

16 May, 1866





©

THE AGAMEMNON,
4 1/2 11 5-

CHOEPHORI, AND EUMENIDES

OF 1 1/2

ÆSCHYLUS

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

Anna
A. SWANWICK,

TRANSLATOR OF FAUST, TASSO, IPHIGENIA, ETC.

LONDON :

BELL AND DALDY, 186, FLEET STREET, AND
6, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1865.

Ga 9.524.

Feb.

Grochwin

1865. May 16.

Frederick Mend.

and
the
the

P R E F A C E.

It has been truly remarked by Shelley, "that the jury which sits in judgment upon a poet must be composed of his peers; it must be empannelled by time from the selectest of the wise of many generations." By the verdict of this august tribunal, *Æschylus* takes rank with Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, and may justly be regarded as one of "the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

As it may appear presumptuous to offer to the public a new translation of the *Æschylean* trilogy, the grandest dramatic work of classical antiquity, I may perhaps be allowed to state that I have not entered upon the task altogether uninvited. On the publication of my translation of 'Faust,' and the other master-works of Goethe, in Bohn's Standard Library, I was strongly urged by the late Baron Bunsen to undertake the translation of the Greek dramas. I felt honoured by the proposal; and though I was not immediately impelled to act upon the suggestion, his words have dwelt in my memory, and have encouraged me to complete an arduous and very difficult undertaking.

Considerable diversity of opinion prevails respecting the propriety of employing rhymed metres as substitutes for the complex forms of classical poetry; hence it may not be inexpedient briefly to state my reasons for adopting them, as affording in my judgment the only adequate vehicle for reproducing the choral odes of the Greek dramas.

With regard to the principles which should guide the translator in the execution of his task, it is, I believe, universally recognized that a translation ought, as faithfully as possible, to reflect the original, both in spirit and in form, and that any wilful or unacknowledged deviation from it is tantamount to a breach of trust. The difficulty of rigidly applying these principles to the translation of the choral odes will be apparent when we remember that the medium through which the thought of the ancient

poet has to be re-embodied differs so essentially from that of the original as to render the principle of imitation, with reference to their musical intonations, inapplicable. The futility of attempting to imitate the forms of classical poetry in a language the metres of which are governed not by Time, but by Accent, has been pointed out by Professor Newman, in the preface to his admirable translation of the 'Iliad,' the excellence of which can only be fully appreciated by a careful comparison with the original.

"An accented metre," he says, "in a language loaded with consonants cannot have the same sort of sounding beauty as a quantitative metre in a highly vocalized language. It is not audible sameness of metre, but a likeness of moral genius which is to be aimed at." The translator, having thus no authoritative models to necessitate the adoption of particular forms, is at liberty, without incurring the charge of unfaithfulness, to adopt those metres, rhymed or unrhymed, which approve themselves to his judgment as most in harmony with the spirit of the original. In order to fulfil this condition, however, he must take into consideration the highly lyrical character of the choral odes, which associated themselves not only with music, but also with the choral dance.

Now, this lyrical element of ancient poetry, not admitting of translation, requires to be born anew, and for this purpose we have a most felicitous adjunct in rhyme, which, when judiciously employed, may be regarded as a musical accompaniment, pervading the choral harmonies, enhancing their beauty, and at the same time serving to mark the time.

The only possible objection to the use of an ornament so attractive and significant, and at the same time so conformable to the genius of the English language, is the notion, very generally entertained, that "the exigencies of rhyme forbid faithfulness." Holding fidelity to the spirit of the original to be the cardinal virtue of a translator, I should, if this opinion were well founded, abandon rhyme without hesitation. It appears to me, however, that the objection is overstated, and that it is better to aim at the true lyrical ideal, however difficult of realization. The solution of the problem can only be worked out by experience. How far I have succeeded in combining scrupulous fidelity to the original with the employment of rhyme, it is not for me to judge; metrical translation must always be a matter of compromise, and no one can be so sensitively aware of the shortcomings of a translation as the translator.

My desire to bespeak for the dramas of Æschylus that intelligent study which is essential for their true appreciation has induced me to attempt in my introduction a very slight sketch of the progress of religious thought, as manifested through a few of the great master-works of literature and art. Poets are representative men; and poetry, under its higher aspects, may justly be regarded as the fairest flower of the age and country which gave it birth, drawing its nourishment from the deepest roots of the national life, and concealing beneath its delicate petals the germs of the future. Hence every great poem requires for its elucidation, not only to be studied in connection with contemporaneous history, but also to be brought into comparison with the kindred productions of other ages and nations. New insight is thus gained into the developments of history, and the tendencies of modern thought are more clearly interpreted when brought face to face with the conceptions and aspirations of the old pagan world. If a complete history of religious development were to be given, it would of course be necessary to go back to the prior Monotheism which probably preceded the earliest Pantheistic nature-worship of which we have any record, and also to investigate the links of transition from the Vedic Divinities to the ideal Personalities of Olympus. Such an inquiry would, however, exceed the scope of an introduction.

In considering the Zeus of Æschylus I have confined myself almost entirely to the conception of the Olympian King embodied in the *Oresteia*, leaving untouched the apparent discrepancy between the character there portrayed and that depicted in the *Prometheus Bound*. I agree with those critics who believe that the discrepancy is only apparent, and would vanish had we the opportunity of studying the other members of the *Promethean* trilogy. Critics are agreed that the *Suppliants* ought also to be regarded as an intermediate piece, linking together the lost dramas of the *Ægyptii* and the *Danaïdes*. These fragmentary works can, I believe, be only satisfactorily interpreted when studied in connection with the *Oresteia*. The investigation would, however, necessitate a reference to the remaining dramas of Æschylus, and must therefore be postponed to a future opportunity.

All true lovers of Art, who recognize her legitimate function as a revealer of truth, a mediator between the Finite and the Infinite, cannot fail to regret the subordinate position to which she is condemned in the present day, when she is too often regarded

tt/ in the light of a mere elegant superfluity, as one of the costly adjuncts of our modern civilization. The true dignity of art has been nobly vindicated by Hegel in his celebrated work, entitled 'Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik.' As this work is, I believe, comparatively little known in England, I have ventured to recast, with some modifications, a few of his leading ideas, and to embody them in my introduction. I refer more especially to his analysis of the Greek dramas, and to his exposition of the fundamental ideas which characterize the three great eras—the symbolical, classical, and romantic—which mark alike the history of religion and of art. I have also availed myself of C. O. Müller's admirable dissertations on the Eumenides, together with Professor Max Müller's lectures on language, second series, and his history of ancient Sanscrit literature. With regard to mythological lore, I am chiefly indebted to Welcker's 'Griechische Götterlehre,' Kuhn's 'Herabkunft des Feuers,' and also to Guigniant's 'Religions de l'Antiquité,' translated from the German of Creuzer.

I have great pleasure in expressing my grateful acknowledgments to my friend, Professor Newman, for the valuable assistance which he has most kindly rendered me in the execution of my task. The difficulty of translating the Æschylean odes is immeasurably heightened by the corrupt condition of the text; I beg to call attention to the conjectural emendations suggested by him, which will be found at the end of each drama, a large proportion of which I have adopted in my translation. In dealing with disputed and difficult passages, I have earnestly endeavoured, to the best of my judgment, to interpret the meaning in harmony with the spirit of the original; and I gladly acknowledge my obligation to previous commentators and translators. I am also indebted for several valuable suggestions to my friend, Mr. W. W. Lloyd.

The particulars embodied in the stage directions, and also the arrangements of the chorus in the Eumenides, are for the most part derived from Müller's Dissertations.

Should my efforts meet with encouragement, I shall hope to complete my version of Æschylus by translating the remaining dramas.

REGENT'S PARK, June 1865.

CONTENTS.



INTRODUCTION	.	.	.	.	.	.	ix
AGAMEMNON	.	.	.	.	.	.	3
CHOEPHORI	.	.	.	.	.	.	77
EUMENIDES	.	.	.	.	.	.	137

INTRODUCTION.

IN order to appreciate the poetry of antiquity, it is necessary to take into consideration the religious ideas which lie at its root, which also in the course of their development have determined the character alike of ancient literature and art; when we consider, moreover, the immense influence which the stream of Aryan thought, by its interfusion with Christianity, has exerted over the culture of the western world, a new and twofold interest attaches to each of the great master-works of classical antiquity, as exhibiting not only the level which the religious thought of the age had already reached, but also as indicating the direction of its future development.

Accordingly, in offering to the public a new version of the *Orestea*, the only complete trilogy which has escaped the wreck of time, it may not be altogether irrelevant if I endeavour to determine the position of *Æschylus* among those kindlers of the beacon-fire, through whose agency the light of ancient wisdom was transmitted from age to age before the advent of Christianity.

With this view it will be necessary to give a sketch (necessarily very meagre and imperfect) of the progress of religious thought, both before and after his appearance on the stage of history, and as art has its root in the religious nature of man, we shall thus obtain a key to the three great epochs which mark the artistic development of humanity, which have been characterized as the Symbolical, the Classical, and the Romantic eras.

When the rays of tradition first dawn upon our planet, we discover the primeval ancestors of the Aryan race, before their dispersion from their common home, still gazing with awe and wonder upon the working of the vast nature-powers by which they were environed. While led through the religious instincts implanted in human nature to recognize the existence of a

Being or Beings, who hear and answer prayer, they were unable to separate the idea of mind, as a causal power, from the aspects of external nature. Accordingly, the shadowy divinities of the Vedic Pantheon, Indra, Agni, Varuna, can hardly be regarded as distinct personalities, holding definite relations to each other, or to their worshippers. As in the fluctuating scenery of the diurnal drama the sun is obscured by clouds, which in their turn are scattered and anon collect again, so these deified impersonations of physical phenomena loom dimly before our mental vision, each supreme and absolute in turn; nor is it easy to determine whether behind these innumerable divinities, the conception of One infinite Spirit had yet dawned upon the Aryan mind.

The deities of the Vedas vanish from our gaze, lost

"In the deep backward and abysm of time."

After the lapse of ages they reappear upon the stage, so modified, however, that it is difficult to recognize their identity: on the southern side of the Himalayahs they assume the form of the great Brahminical trinity, Vishnu, Brahma, and Siva, emerging from a background of Pantheism; while in Greece we behold them metamorphosed into the hierarchy of the Olympian gods. So striking is the contrast between the deities apostrophized by the Vedic bards, and the grand impersonations of Grecian poetry and art, that without conclusive evidence the connection between them could hardly be recognized. This evidence is twofold;—in the first place comparative philology reveals the fact that the sacred names of the Greek Pantheon are in the Vedas intelligible words, expressive of natural phenomena, while in the *Iliad* we are introduced to the Olympian deities during the process of transformation; we detect their forms gradually disengaging themselves from the physical phenomena with which they were associated, of which also they may be regarded as the spiritual but almost impalpable essence.

This transformation of physical into humanized deities has been compared by Welcker to the mysterious process by which the chrysalis passes into its more perfect form. "The Nature-god," he says, "became enveloped in a web of mythical fable, and emerged as a divine, humanized personality." For the principle

which lies at the root of this metamorphosis, he points to the gradual development of human nature, to the growing consciousness of free-will, accompanied by the recognition of mind as a higher manifestation of deity than any material phenomena, and consequently of man as the true *Shekinah*.

As, however, in the earlier Vedic worship men were unable to separate the idea of mind, as a causal power, from the varied aspects of external nature, so, when they began to direct their thoughts within, they were equally embarrassed to distinguish between the divine and human elements in the soul of man. Every inward movement which appeared at all exceptional was ascribed to the prompting of a deity; not only were the nobler emotions of courage and self-restraint referred to divine inspiration (of which in the *Iliad* we find innumerable examples), but the gods are also represented as the authors of delusion (ii. 8. xxii. 24) and treachery (iv. 93), as when Zeus sends the deceitful dream to Agamemnon, and Athena prompts Pandarus to violate the treaty. One of the most noteworthy instances of this perplexity is found in Agamemnon's exculpation of himself touching the outrage upon Achilles (xix. 85).

"I am not guilty, Jove and Fate | and the dusk-roaming Fury,
 'Tis these who in assembly fir'd | my breast with savage frenzy,"*

A plea, the justice of which is admitted by Achilles, who echoes the sentiment of Agamemnon.

"O Father Jove, great frenesies | to men thou truly sendest."

Moreover, on the first transference of human passion and emotion, together with the conditions of human existence, to the super-mundane sphere, the very conception of divine existence, as absolved from restraint, would lead to the deification of human infirmity together with the higher attributes of humanity: of this we have a memorable example in the character of the Homeric Zeus. This tendency would doubtless be accelerated by the phenomena expounded by Prof. Max Müller, in his lectures on language. As the several branches of the Aryan stock

* I have availed myself here, and in subsequent quotations, of Professor Newman's translation.

dispersed, migrating from their common home in Central Asia, the original signification of words was forgotten or obscured; and thus, language originally descriptive of natural phenomena, became transferred to the conditions of human life—a translation which totally metamorphosed the character of the occurrence.

The transference of human faith and worship from the vague nature-powers of the Vedas to the humanized deities of Olympus, together with the association of the latter into a celestial hierarchy, under the supremacy of Zeus, assumed in Grecian mythology the form of a revolution, and was symbolized under the grand old allegory of the battle between the Titans and the Olympian gods. This revolution, involving a variety of complex phenomena, especially the fusion of the mythology of different tribes or nations into one, was doubtless accomplished in its main features in the ages anterior to Homer.

However, as we have no Grecian literature to illustrate this period, we are unable to trace the history of the transition, nor can we determine how far the current mythology of his age was modified by the individual genius of the great epic bard, whose immortal work, while inaugurating a new epoch in the history of civilization, at the same time exhibits, as has been truly said, the last lingering traces of the primeval age. A superficial acquaintance with the *Iliad* suffices to reveal the original elemental character of the Homeric divinities, a fact which would be more generally recognized, were we not accustomed to carry to the perusal of the earlier poet the conceptions derived from the artistic impersonations of a later age. This transitional character of the Homeric mythology will be more apparent if we carry back to their original root in natural phenomena a few of the Olympian divinities, and then follow the process of their development, as they appear successively in the *Iliad* and in the *Orestea*. The connection between Jupiter and the sky, familiar to Greek and Latin scholars, may be traced down to the latest period of classical poetry, so Horace—"Manet sub Jove frigidus venator."—It was reserved, however, for the science of comparative philology to point out the origin of this connection. Thus we learn that "Zeus, the most sacred name in Greek mythology, is the same word as Dyaus in Sanscrit, which means the sky; and that

originally Dyu was the bright heavenly deity in India, as well as in Greece."

It is remarked by Welcker, that "the greatest fact, when we go back to the highest Grecian antiquity, is the idea of God, as the supreme Being, associated with a nature-worship, never entirely suppressed, together with the conception of a divine family derived from Zeus."

Accordingly, we recognize in the Homeric Zeus three distinct elements, the divine, the physical, and the human, welded together into an artificial unity, and exhibiting a character of marvellous incongruity, endowed with attributes the most inconsistent and contradictory. Thus in not a few passages he is represented as the supreme deity,—

"Who reigneth mighty over all, both mortals and immortals." (Il. xii. 242.) "Whose decree, once sanctioned by the nod, is neither deceptive nor revokable."—(Il. i. 527.) "The Counsellor, greatest and best; Father of gods and men; the Guardian of the oath."—(iv. 235.) "The Vindicator of righteous law."—(xxi. 387.) "The High Arbitrator of war."—(xix. 224.) His superiority over the other gods is forcibly brought out in the beginning of the 8th book (18—27), where the other dwellers in Olympus are invited to grasp the golden chain dropped from Heaven's heights, and held immovably in the hand of Zeus.—
 "Lay hold, and throw your force on it, all gods both male and female,
 Yet never shall ye down to earth, drag from the lofty heaven
 Zeus, the supreme deviser."*

It is as the god of compassion that the diviner aspect of his character is the most conspicuous (ix. 502): when we consider the savagery of an age in which human victims were sacrificed to appease the manes of the dead, and where tendencies to cannibalism may perhaps be detected (iv. 35), (xxii. 345), (xxiv. 212), the prominence given to compassion as an attribute of the supreme deity, is very remarkable.

Notwithstanding these high attributes, no exercise of providential power is ever assigned to the Homeric Zeus; he is beguiled

* Creuzer has pointed out the same image in a passage of the Bhagavat-gîta.

by Hera, yet swayed by her counsel (xvi. 460), and though desirous to save Ilium, yet, at her entreaty, he surrenders it to destruction (iv. 43). Like the heavens, now bright with sunshine, and anon dark with storm, he exhibits all the capricious fluctuations of an elemental power, being alternately malignant and benign, without any apparent motive beyond his own caprice, uninfluenced by moral considerations.—Then, again, with regard to his supremacy, not only is it questioned by Poseidon (xv. 185), it is actually imperilled by that deity, in conjunction with Hera and Athena (i. 396—406), and is only rescued from their machinations by the intervention of Briareus.

These legends probably symbolize convulsions of the elements, which threaten to blot out the sky, of which Zeus is the impersonation. In this character, as an elemental god, he is not only the father of rivers, he also presides over all meteorological phenomena.

Thus with his *Ægis*, the dark storm-cloud, he veils the summit of Mount Ida (xvii. 593), and even ocean shudders at his dreadful bolt. He rains (xii. 5). He snows (xii. 280). He deviseth hail and piercing sleet, and rainy flood (x. 5). He uproots the sturdy oak (xiv. 415), and he snaps the bowstring of Teucer (xv. 469). Occasionally the moral and physical elements are most curiously blended, as in the elaborate description of the rain deluge with which he punishes the crooked verdict of the unjust judge (xvi. 385). Many other passages of a similar character might be cited.

But it is in his relation with Hera, and the various heroines who are represented as the objects of his love, that the human element in the conception of the Homeric Zeus appears under its most revolting aspect.

His character has accordingly been described as the most repulsive in the whole circle of Olympian life, exhibiting the very temper of the most advanced depravity.* “It is the Jupiter of Homer in whom we see first the most complete surrender of personal morality and self-government to mere appetite, and the most thoroughly selfish groundwork of character. Abandonment

* Gladstone's Homer.

to gross passion, ungovernable self-indulgence rises to its climax in him."

We seem to inhale a purer atmosphere when, by the aid of comparative philology, we are enabled to translate back into natural phenomena occurrences which, when transferred to the sphere of human life, are repulsive and revolting. Thus it is not difficult to recognize the physical idea which underlies the conception of Hera, whose name, derived from *ἔρα*, the earth (which has been traced back to the Sanscrit), sufficiently indicates the original conception symbolized by her marriage with Zeus, the sky. Ge, the earth, is invoked in the *Iliad*, with Zeus and other divinities (ii. 277; xix. 258). Of the three goddesses, Hera, Dione, and Demeter, in whom the primeval goddess reappears mythically metamorphosed (who also originally held the same relation to Zeus as seen on ancient coins), Hera is alone distinguished in the *Iliad* as the Queen of Heaven, while Demeter, without divine significance, is alluded to in connection with agricultural pursuits (xiii. 322; v. 500), and Dione appears as the mother of Aphrodite (v. 370).

It was through the Achæan race that Hera acquired her high position in the Olympian theogony: among a warlike people, who abandoned agriculture to their dependents, the physical attributes of the goddess were gradually obscured, and accordingly we find her in the *Iliad* as the peculiar patroness of Achilles, "chief of the battle-loving myrmidons (i. 208; ix. 254). Though the physical attributes of Hera are almost entirely suppressed in the *Iliad*, we trace a curious lingering of the nature element in the Theogamia, described with such luxuriance of imagery in the 14th book (345—351). "As the story of the Olympian Father descending as golden rain into the prison of Danaë was meant for the bright sky, delivering earth from the bonds of winter;" so the union of Zeus and Hera, shrouded in golden mist, doubtless typified the same natural phenomenon, followed as it was by a new outgrowth of tender herbage, "the lotus, the crocus, and the hyacinth." A similar remnant of natural symbolism might probably be detected in other Homeric legends, which in their human aspect are puerile and revolting; as when the refractory spouse of Zeus hangs suspended by a

golden chain, a pair of anvils attached to her ankles (xv. 19). How far Homer recognized the original significance of these legends is an interesting but still unsettled question.—Müller (Prolog. 279).

If from the thundering, cloud-compelling Zeus of the *Iliad*, we turn to the Zeus of the *Orestea*, the contrast is so remarkable that it would almost appear as if the great dramatist, by the very emphasis with which he brings out the providential character of the Supreme Ruler, desired, like his contemporary, Pindar, to enter his protest against the unworthy conception of the Epic bard. This hypothesis seems the more plausible when we consider that the age of Æschylus immediately succeeded that of Pisistratus, who had given his sanction to the enactments of Solon, "by which the *Iliad* was raised into a liturgy, periodically rehearsed by law at the greatest of the Athenian festivals;" "exhibiting for the first and last time in the history of the world, the preservation of a poet's compositions made an object of permanent public policy."

Accordingly, in the opening chorus of the *Agamemnon*, Zeus is represented as conducting in person the grand judicial retribution which, in consequence of the crime of Paris, involves Ilium in ruin. In the second chorus this providential action of Zeus is brought out with even stronger emphasis; he is there represented as having with prescient might foreordained the blow which fell at length in accomplishment of his decree. The mighty net of Divine retribution is cast over the devoted city, and the character of Zeus is vindicated as the righteous governor of men. So again in the third chorus, it is Zeus, protector of the guest, who sends Helen, a fury fraught with destruction, to avenge on the sons of Priam the violated rights of hospitality; and whereas in the *Iliad*, there is division in heaven, the deities, swayed by motives purely personal, and often of the lowest character (xxiv. 30; iv. 48), take part in the quarrel, and appear arrayed against one another in the hostile ranks;—in the *Orestea*, on the contrary, they are represented as leagued with Zeus in carrying out the great ends of justice. Thus, when the cause is brought before the celestial tribunal, "without dissentient voice they cast their votes into the bloody urn, sealing the doom of Troy." (Ag. 789.)

Zeus is not only represented as exercising supreme authority in the moral government of mankind —

"In will, in deed,
Sole cause, sole fashioner" (Ag. 1462);

he also acts inwardly on the souls of men: it is Zeus whose highest gift is an untainted mind (Ag. 900); who leads men to wisdom through suffering (Ag. 169); a function in which he is aided by the subordinate deities (Ag. 175), who are represented as the exponents of his will. (Eum. 588.)

In the Suppliants, together with a curious lingering of the mythological element, we find the grandest ascriptions of omnipotence to the Olympian King. Thus, he is invoked as "King of kings, most blessed of the blest, among the Perfect, Power most perfect, Zeus, supreme in bliss!" (Sup. 518.) He is characterized as "Mighty Zeus, Protector of the guest, the Highest, who directs Destiny by hoary law." (Sup. 655.) "Zeus, Lord of ceaseless time," (Sup. 567,) "almighty Ruler of the earth." (Sup. 795.) He is likewise apostrophized as the great Artificer, supreme Ruler, who knows no superior, whose deed is prompt as his word to execute the designs of his deep-counselling mind. (Sup. 587.) Thus, the mythological vesture, woven of Nature and Humanity, which had wellnigh shrouded the grander features of the Homeric Zeus, is partially withdrawn in *Æschylus*, and we behold a Being whom men could worship without degradation, till in the fulness of time the light of celestial Truth burst with clear effulgence on the heathen world.

We can hardly imagine that the capricious elemental deity of the *Iliad* should have been metamorphosed into the venerable deity of the *Orestea* by the slow process of spiritual development alone, without the action of external agency: if we consider the affinity between the Hellenic and the Persian races, and the close contact into which they were brought in Asia Minor, the modification of Grecian thought by the interfusion of Persian elements will not appear remarkable. In support of this hypothesis, I might appeal not only to the high spiritual character attributed to Ahura-Mazda, the Zeus of *Zend-Avesta*, but also to the sharp contrast there exhibited between the principles of Good and

Evil, a feature which strikingly distinguishes the theogony of Æschylus from that of Homer.

The relics of ancient sun-worship which are discovered in various localities of Greece bear witness to the vast influence exerted by the celestial luminary over the imaginations and the religious emotions of the primeval world, an influence which is also attested by the numerous divinities in whom the Sun-god reappears, mythically metamorphosed. Helios, in the *Iliad*, is characterised as "the Unwearable;" "the Bringer of light;" like Mithra, who has a thousand ears and ten thousand eyes, "He overseeth all, and hearkeneth to all things" (iii. 277). On the reconciliation of Agamemnon and Achilles, a boar is sacrificed to Helios and to Zeus xix. 197). The Trojans sacrifice to the Earth and to Helios, the Achæans to Zeus (iii. 104).

In the opening chorus of the *Agamemnon*, the ancient Arcadian Sun-god, Pan, whose name is not mentioned in the *Iliad*, is associated with Zeus and Apollo, as sending the Fury to punish crime. The original character of this divinity, who with Zeus and Apollo shares the epithet *Lykeios*, is betrayed by many significant symbols, associated with his effigies and his worship. Among the various impersonations of the Sun, however, there is none which can compare in interest and significance with Dionysos and Apollo, both solar divinities, whose worship, nevertheless, offers many remarkable points of opposition and contact.

The celestial luminary was imagined to sleep during the winter and to awake to consciousness in spring; accordingly Dionysos, rising from the sea at the vernal equinox to inaugurate the new solar year, was hailed with transports of joy by his enthusiastic votaries. The fluctuating character of Dionysos reminds us of the nature deities of the Vedas; Proteus-like, he assumes every variety of form and of age; he is the god of summer and of winter, of darkness and of light; he holds in his hand the inebriating chalice, together with the cosmical mirror, exhibiting the images of all things. His worship is of peculiar interest, from its association with the Greek drama. Grecian tragedy, as is well known, being an expansion of the choruses chanted at the Dionysic festivals, which rehearsed the vicissi-

tudes of the solar god, in his progress through the heavenly signs. This circumstance exerted "an overruling effect upon the quality of the Athenian drama;" "from this early cradle of tragedy arose a sanctity which compelled all things to modulate into the same religious key."*

Peculiar interest moreover attaches to Dionysos, from his association with the mysteries which exerted so powerful an influence over the Grecian mind.

The story of Dionysos, embodying some of the main features of his worship, appears in the *Iliad* (vi. 132), invested however with ethical, not religious significance. "It is a remarkable circumstance that precisely those divinities, Demeter and Dionysos, whose truly religious influence was most profound and pervading in Greece, are all but unmentioned in Homer, and may be said, in fact, to be excluded from his scheme of the divine community."† An interesting question arises as to the cause of this omission on the part of the great epic bard. Are we to imagine that the peculiar sanctity which attached to these divinities induced him deliberately to avoid the subject; or must we conclude that in the Homeric age their worship had not yet assumed that mysterious and impressive character, which subsequently distinguished it? I confess I am unable to decide the question, but incline to the latter hypothesis.

The original solar signification of Apollo is maintained among other eminent scholars by Creuzer, Welcker, and Gerhard, who appeal alike to ancient monuments and coins, and to vestiges of ancient Sun-worship found in various localities in Greece. "If we desire," says Creuzer, "in studying Greek mythology, to reach its ultimate roots, we must explore the ancient literatures of Persia and India. If from this point of view we investigate the original identity of the Sun-god and Apollo, we shall find in the figurative language of the Vedas the primitive occasion of the transition from the former to the latter."

One of the most striking features of the ancient Sun-worship

* Theory of Greek Tragedy. De Quincey.

† Homer, his Art and his Age. W. Watkiss Lloyd, *Classical Museum*, XXII.

was its dualistic character, founded upon the twofold aspect of the solar luminary, as at the same time a beneficent and a destroying power, as conquering and conquered, as dying, yet endowed with ever-renovated life; a conception which explains the enigma said to be uttered by the oracle of Apollo at Claros in Ionia, "I am Jupiter Ammon in Spring, and black Pluto in Winter." In order to understand the more terrible aspects of the ancient Sun-god, we have only to remember the annual fevers occasioned by his scorching rays, and the danger of famine from failure of the crops: after the lightning of Zeus, there was no natural agent so destructive as the arrow of Helios; as calamity, moreover, was regarded in ancient times as the expression of divine anger, expiatory and penitential rites formed an essential element of the ancient Sun-worship. This twofold aspect of Helios finds expression also in the name of the later Sun-god, Apollo, which, in the ancient Doric Æolian form, was not Ἀπόλλων, the Destroyer, but Ἀπέλλων, the Averter. It is under his darker aspect "as the Minister of Vengeance, and the Chastiser of Arrogance," that he appears for the most part in the poetry of Homer. "His punishments are pestilence and death:" "Achilles, to whom he is particularly hostile, calls him the most pernicious of all the gods."*

While the Homeric Apollo, in his relation with mortals, appears thus in the light of a malevolent and destroying power, among the Olympians he is introduced in association with the Muses, as the god of Music, charming the assembled deities with his harp (i. 603). The notion that the stars and the other heavenly bodies accomplished their revolutions to the sound of music is expressed in the ancient poetry of India, and also in that of the Persians. As the rhythm of the cosmical movements depended upon the solar luminary, the great orderer of times and seasons, it is not surprising that from the most remote antiquity the Sun-god was represented as playing on the cithara; in this character he is portrayed on the oldest Archaic vases, encircled by the dancing hours.

Although in the Oresteia Apollo is introduced incidentally as

* C. O. Müller's History of the Dorians.

a destroying and avenging deity, as in the passage already quoted in the 1st Chorus of the *Agamemnon*, and also where he is invoked by Cassandra as her destroyer (1047), he nevertheless wears, for the most part, a more benignant aspect. He is emphatically the Healer, the Prophet-leech, who purifies from all defilement (*Eu.* 62); the god of joy whom it befits not to invoke with words of sorrow (*Ag.* 1056); the most striking point of divergence from the Homeric conception of Apollo is to be found in his relation to Zeus, with whom he appears in the most intimate association. As the god of prophecy, the guardian of the sacred oracles, he declares most emphatically that he is simply the expounder of his Father's will, and consequently that he cannot lie (*Eu.* 585, 588). It is under this aspect, as the god of Truth, that a deep significance attaches to the function which he assumes in the court of Areopagus as Exegetes, or expounder of the unwritten law. "At Athens, the Exegetæ, who presided over the purification of blood-guilty persons, were elected, or at least their election was ratified, by the Delphic Oracle."* In this character, Apollo appears before the Areopagites, to expound the law in relation to homicide, and thus the deep-thoughted poet enforces the important principle that the judicial proceedings of human tribunals must be under the presidency of Truth.

* According to Welcker, however, the Moon appears of all natural objects to have been the most universally adored. Several tribes in Africa and America are said at the present day to worship the moon without the sun, while no nation has been known to whom the sun is sacred without the moon. In primeval ages the computations of time were based upon the changes of the moon, which accordingly in the Indo-Germanic languages is known as "The Measurer;" and so deeply did the lunar phenomena appeal to the religious emotions of humanity, that among all early nations, as well as among the Jews, the new moon festivals were celebrated with peculiar solemnity. In warm climates, moreover, vegetation is nourished almost entirely by the dew, which falls most copiously when the moon is

* Dissertations on the Eumenides. C. O. Müller.

full; hence Selene was early characterized as the mother of Herse, the Bringer of the Dew. It would be very interesting to trace the various media of transition by which the bright nocturnal luminary was gradually metamorphosed into the Huntress Diana,—

“Fair silver-shafted queen, for ever chaste,
Who set at nought the frivolous bolts of Cupid.”

So great, however, is the diversity of form under which the Moon-goddess has been conceived, exhibiting a different physiognomy in every different locality, according to the varied aspect under which she has been regarded, that I must content myself with a brief notice of her characteristics, as she appears in the *Iliad* and the *Oresteia*.

To the goddess of the green-wood and the glade belonged of right all animals both tame and wild; accordingly she is characterized in the *Iliad* as (*πότνια θηρῶν*), “Queen of all Venison” (xxi. 470), and in the *Agamemnon*, she is represented as taking under her especial care—

“The tender brood
Of harmless young, that, from the swelling teat,
In glade or forest draw their nurture sweet,
Whether of gentle or of savage mood.” (Ag. 138.)

While thus gracious to the lower animals, towards humanity, on the contrary, she, like the Homeric Apollo, wears the aspect of a destroying rather than of a benignant power. Thus she is represented as made by Zeus (*λέοντα γύναιε*), “a lion unto women, to whom he hath granted might to slay whomso she willeth” (xxi. 484). Accordingly, in her anger she slew Laodamia, daughter of Bellerophontes (vi. 205), and wrathful, on account of her neglected rites, she sends the savage, white-tusked boar,—

“Who visited with dire annoy | the orchard-grounds of Ceneus.”
(ix. 540.)

Andromache, too, in her address to Hector, alludes to her mother slain by “arrow-pouring Artemis.” (vi. 428.)

In the *Agamemnon* she appears under the same dark aspect, as the goddess for whose propitiation the sacrifice of Iphigenia

was consummated, a tragedy which by calling down upon her husband the vengeance of Clytemnestra, forms the groundwork of the drama.

Far more prominent, however, is the position assigned to the Maiden Goddess, Pallas Athena, who may be justly regarded as the bright, consummate flower of Grecian mythology; and most interesting it is to trace the history of her growth from her rise in the land of the Aryans to her culmination in the majestic goddess of the Eumenides.

The elemental character of the Homeric Zeus suggests the idea of some natural phenomenon underlying the extraordinary birth of his brilliant offspring, "from no mother born." Accordingly her name has been regarded as corresponding to the Sanskrit *Aháná*, a recognized appellation of the dawn in the Veda; and thus her miraculous birth from the head of Zeus, translated back into Sanskrit, implies that Ushas, the Dawn, sprang from the East, the forehead of the sky.* Welcker gives a different interpretation of her name. "The Grecians," he says, "brought with them from their distant home the conception of an element of light and warmth above the atmosphere, independent of the sun." He derives her name from *aith*, to burn, with the ancient suffix *νη*, and regards her as the impersonation of the pure Ether, the abode of Zeus.

The peculiar rites with which her worship was celebrated in different localities, together with the symbolism associated with her effigy on ancient vases and coins, attest, according to Welcker, the original elemental character of the goddess. This deified impersonation of a nature-power, whether identified with the Ether or the Dawn, became gradually invested with a variety of attributes, human and superhuman; accordingly, the Athena of the Iliad, though more sharply defined than the Olympian Zeus, nevertheless exhibits the same transitional character which marks the other deities of the Homeric theogony. In her divine capacity she is the goddess of war and of industrial art, the representative of practical sagacity as opposed to poetic inspiration, which was assigned to Apollo. She hears and answers prayer;

* Max Müller. Lectures on Language. 2nd Series.

she acts inwardly on the minds of the Hellenic heroes; she restrains the wrath of Achilles (i. 198), she imparts aid to Tydeus (iv. 390.) Many similar examples might be adduced. Nevertheless she is not above the practice of deceit, as when she persuades Pandarus to violate the treaty (iv. 94), and also where she lures Hector with guile. Moreover, the intimate connection between the bright, heaven-sprung goddess and her father which in the later mythology forms one of her most striking characteristics, is only slightly indicated in the *Iliad* (viii. 38, 373). In general her relation to the Thunderer is one of hostility; she is represented as leagued with Hera and Poseidon in their attempt to shackle Zeus, for whom she expresses her contempt in no measured terms, while with Hera she appears most intimately associated:—

“Close sat they, side by side, and woes against the Trojans plotted,
Truly Athena dumb abode before her proper Father,
Though wounded by his argument, and seized with fierce displeasure.”
(viii. 458.) (iv. 21.)

Traces of meteoric symbolism in connection with the virgin goddess may, I think, be traced in the *Iliad*. Thus, in girding herself for battle, she lets fall upon the starry pavement of her father the brilliant robe,—

“Whose tissue she herself had wrought, and with her hand
embroidered;”

her *Ægis* is the terrible storm-cloud, her casque, all golden, measured to contain a hundred cities' footmen, recalls the vaulted sky. She descends from Heaven like a meteor (iv. 70), or like a rainbow wrapt in purple cloud (xvii. 551). Thus, too, she is described as blowing with gentle breath the spear of Hector (xx. 440), and as becoming invisible by assuming the casque of *Aïdes* (v. 845).

The flaming chariot, with its golden-trapped steeds, in which she descends with Hera to the assistance of the Greeks (v. 720, 748), while suggesting to the imagination the bright rays of light, which spring with the speed of lightning through the portals of the east, recalls also the Vedic invocation to *Ushas* (the dawn) to come in her ample and beautiful chariot, dispersing

the darkness; or we think of the golden chariot of Savitri, or of Indra, decorated with golden ornaments, his white-footed coursers harnessed to his car with a golden yoke.

The function assigned to birds in the *Iliad* seems also like an echo of the Vedas. Thus, when Athena is despatched by Zeus to distil nectar and ambrosia into Achilles,—

“She plunged in semblance of a bird, the lengthy-feather’d osprey
 Shrill screaming down from upper sky.”—(xix. 349.)

It is interesting to remember in this connection the Aryan myth according to which the gods allowed the heavenly soma-drink, the Vedic prototype of the Grecian nectar, to be brought down to earth by a falcon. In illustration of this subject Kuhn quotes two Vedic hymns (R. iv. 26), (R. iv. 27), in the first of which occurs the following passage:—“The speeding falcon, the strong bird, allied to the gods, brought the quickening, invigorating soma from afar, stealing it from highest heaven.”

When Athena and Apollo

“Over the armies take their seats, in guise of plumed vultures,
 Upon the lofty beech of Zeus, the *Ægis*-holding Father,”—(vii. 59.)

they remind us of the two birds who sit in friendly fashion upon the summit of the soma-bearing tree of the Vedas. Thus, too, she sends a heron to greet Ulysses and Diomedes; they recognized the cry, and rejoiced in the divine message (x. 275). Welcker detects a figurative allusion to meteoric fact in the epithets *γλαυκῶπις* and *τритоγένεια*, by which the Homeric Athena is distinguished.

If we turn now to the Athena of *Æschylus*, the grand impersonation of the wisdom, benignity, and might of her father, we recognize, as before, the emergence of the classic ideal from the symbolizing tendencies of the earlier nature-worship. Seldom has the imagination of poet been haunted by a more majestic image than the Athena of the *Eumenides*; and as we picture her “like an orator on the *Bῆμα*,” organizing the court of the *Areopagus*,” she recalls the grand vision of Divine Wisdom recorded in the book of Prov. (viii.) She, too, standeth in the top of high places, and her voice is heard, unfolding the great truth that human laws and institutions are entitled to reverence only in so

far as they are based upon the strong foundations of eternal justice and morality.

“By me kings reign and princes decree justice ;

By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.”

Prov. viii. 15, 16 ; compare Eum. (461, 535.)

Most emphatically does the Grecian poet proclaim through the lips of Athena that righteousness must be based upon reverence and holy fear, thus coinciding with the highest utterance of Hebrew wisdom ; “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil,” Prov. (viii. 13), (Eum. 661, 669.) Thus, too, wisdom is represented by the Grecian as by the Hebrew bard, as presiding over the phenomena of external nature (Prov. viii. 27), (Eum. 792). Yet while Athena alone unlocks the sealed thunder-halls of Zeus, she, like her Hebrew prototype, “rejoiceth in the habitable parts of the earth,” and as a gardener cherishes his saplings, so “she loves the race of righteous men, exempt from suffering.” (Eum. 872.) This recognition of moral distinctions as the ground of divine favour forms, perhaps, the most striking point of divergence between Homer and Æschylus, and forcibly recalls the high moral tone of the religion of Ahuru-Mazda.

Truly it may be said of the Virgin Goddess that, like the golden dawn, which she is thought to impersonate, she brightens more and more, still heralding by her effulgent but imperfect light the advent of the perfect day. In following the history of the Virgin Goddess, it is interesting to remember that the disappearance of her colossal statue from the Parthenon in the fifth century was coincident with the hymn addressed to her by her passionate worshipper, the neo-Platonist, Proclus ; thus at the last “she makes a swan-like end, fading in music,” and vanishes from history, after commanding, for upwards of a thousand years, the love and veneration of her votaries.

In connection with the study of ancient poetry, as recording the religious life of humanity, it is interesting to consider the history of plastic art, which may be regarded as its sensible expression, and as manifesting, through the medium of ideal forms, the successive stages of its development. Thus if we revert to that phase of the religious life which is embodied in the earliest literary relics of the Aryan race, we shall recognize the impossi-

bility of embodying in harmonious forms beings so impalpable as the deities apostrophized by the Vedic bards. In the poetry of those early times we discern the working of the untutored mind struggling to body forth, through the imagery of external nature, its religious yearnings and aspirations; embarrassed by the complexity of unintelligible phenomena, and destitute of any principle of selection, the imagination runs riot, blends together images the most incongruous, and exhibits that tendency to symbolism which subsequently blossomed out into the colossal systems of India and Eleusis.

The transference of human faith and worship from vague nature-powers, dimly recognized as personal agencies, to veritable personalities, endowed with consciousness and will, and distinguished by diversity of attribute, moral and intellectual, constitutes, as we have seen, the second great stage in the history of human progress. This emancipation of the divine idea from its association with natural phenomena would lead to the recognition of the human form as affording the sole adequate medium for the manifestation of spiritual existence, a discovery which lies at the root of classic art, and inaugurates the second epoch in the artistic development of humanity. We have only to pass from the Hall of Egyptian Antiquities, in the British Museum, to the gallery of the Elgin Marbles, in order to appreciate the importance of the transition.

The Greeks thus realizing the idea that their divinities manifested themselves through the human form, and striving to glorify the temple hallowed by the presence of Deity, were led to discover the essential characteristics of the human organism as a vehicle of superior intelligence. In reproducing their impressions through the medium of art, they have given birth to models of ideal beauty, which show us how fair is the tabernacle of the immortal soul, when the lower propensities are subjected to higher needs. They detected the Divine idea with reference to the human form, and accordingly, in contemplating these glorious creations, we experience that indescribable content which invariably comes over the soul, when, by any agency, we are lifted above the limitations of the finite and phenomenal into the region of eternal truth.

Grand and beautiful as are the classic gods, they nevertheless fail to touch the deepest springs of human feeling. Though invested with the attributes of humanity, we feel that in their emancipation from the sorrows and sufferings incident to our mortal life, they are not true exponents of human nature, while as symbols of Deity they are inadequate to shadow forth the one infinite and eternal mind. From their cold though perfect beauty, the heart of suffering humanity turns to the thorn-crowned figure of the Son of Man, and recognizes in the man of sorrows its true type and representative.

By revealing God as a spirit immanent in the human soul, imparting authority to the oracles of conscience, and sanctity to the inner life, Christianity has dispersed the crowd of heathen divinities, and exalted to the throne of the universe a Heavenly Father whose glory is reflected in the Son of Man. Christ's realization of conscious union between the divine and human spirit, wrought out through the discipline of sorrow, and issuing in perfect love, has revealed a depth of spiritual life of which in the profoundest myths of classical antiquity we see only a dim but most wonderful foreshadowing.

The transition from the classical to the romantic era finds its explanation in these grand central truths of Christianity, which have left their impress alike on art and on literature. Thus, in the head of our Saviour in the *Cena* of Leonardo da Vinci, we see that marvellous union of sublimity and pathos, which, while lifting the soul into a higher atmosphere, at the same time appeals to the deepest sympathies of the human heart. Thus, too, the grand figures of the Sistine Chapel, the prophets and sibyls of Michael Angelo, while exhibiting the human form cast in the majestic mould of the Olympian gods, bear traces, at the same time, of those inner life-struggles which impart to every noteworthy countenance so deep and often so tragic an interest. The literary productions of the romantic era also bear witness to the deeper significance which attaches to human nature since the advent of Christianity—a phenomenon the recognition of which is essential to the true appreciation of classical literature.

The fundamental distinction between the ancient and modern drama will be more fully recognized if we bring into closer com-

parison the two great fathers of dramatic art, Æschylus and Shakespeare, who, though separated from one another by an interval of nearly twenty centuries, yet offer some remarkable points both of analogy and contrast.

In studying the dramas of Æschylus, when we penetrate below the surface, we find that the solution of problems, ethical and religious, bearing upon man's nature and destiny, constitutes their essence, an object to which the delineation of character is made subservient; whereas in the dramas of Shakspeare the development of character constitutes the primary aim, to which he subordinates the underlying idea of the whole; accordingly we should vainly seek in the impersonations of the ancient bard that marvellous insight into the more subtle phenomena of human nature which imparts so intense an interest to the productions of Shakspeare. In Æschylus the collision between moral principles, whose harmonious action is essential to the moral order of the world, is set forth by personages, human and superhuman, whose characters are drawn in bold relief, without exhibiting that delicate shading which charms us in the delineation of the modern bard. These personages are led in obedience to one moral principle to violate another, which in its turn finds advocates and champions. The collision between these opposing interests and the various passions evoked in the struggle sustain the interest of the drama, while the *dénouement* exhibits the vindication of eternal order by the triumph of that principle which is of primary obligation. If we apply these principles to the *Orestea*, we find that while the several members of the trilogy are linked together by a chain of ethical sequence, which resolves itself into the great doctrine of retribution, each drama is at the same time devoted to the solution of a particular problem, and constitutes accordingly a complete and independent whole.

The collision of duties set forth in the *Agamemnon* is of peculiar interest, as illustrating a struggle which has its counterpart in the most touching narrative of Jewish history. Agamemnon, as king and army chief, receives what he believes to be a divine command to propitiate Artemis by the sacrifice of his daughter; an ordeal, the terrible reality of which can only be appreciated when we consider the proneness to human sacrifice which charac-

terised the early ages of society. Abraham, when subjected to a like trial or temptation, after manifesting his perfect submission to what appeared to him to be a divine monition, was led to recognize the true voice of God as harmonizing with the most sacred intuitions of the human heart, and accordingly forbore to slay his child.* Agamemnon, on the contrary, yields to the suggestion of Calchas, and by the sacrifice of Iphigenia violates his obligations to his daughter and his wife. Clytemnestra appears as the avenger of her child, and in vindication of nature's violated rights, prepares for her husband an ignominious death. The stern reprobation of Agamemnon expressed by the Chorus may be compared to the sublime protest of Micah, and other Hebrew prophets, against such deeds of blood. Thus the cruel perversion of religion which found expression in human sacrifice was condemned by the Grecian poet no less than by the Hebrew sage, a consideration which invests the Æschylean drama with profound significance.

In order to appreciate the fundamental idea which underlies the drama of the Choephoroi we must take into consideration the sacred duty of avenging blood, "recognized by the earliest customs and national laws of the East as well as of the West."† On the murder of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra, it was the bounden duty of his son Orestes to avenge his death; the ghost of his murdered father and the Delphic god demand it of him. The collision, therefore, which forms the groundwork of the drama is between the duty of Orestes as the avenger of his father, and his instinctive recognition of the reverence due to his mother, which tends to withhold him from the commission of the deed. With admirable skill the poet makes us feel the terrible nature of the struggle, and the religious motives which decide the issue. When Orestes, almost overcome by his mother's agonizing entreaties, hesitates to commit the bloody act, Pylades, who has accompanied him as a representative of the god, admonishes him of his duty, exclaiming—

"Choose all for foemen rather than the Gods."

* I have followed Dean Stanley's interpretation of this narrative.

† Dissertations on the Eumenides. C. O. Müller.

A profound thought underlies the greater heinousness attached to the murder of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra, than to the murder of Clytemnestra by Orestes. The bond which unites the mother and the son, which Orestes is required to violate, is instinctive, resting upon a law of nature; the tie which unites the husband and the wife is of a different order, involving intelligent volition and reciprocal engagement. The institution of marriage, moreover, lies at the root of all law and order, and with the consequent permanence and sanctity of the domestic relations is the sole guarantee for the healthy development of society; hence the conjugal tie requires to be placed under the special guardianship of the gods and of eternal justice. Hera, who in the *Iliad* plays so prominent and often so undignified a part, is introduced in the *Oresteia* in her grand matronly character, her union with Zeus being alluded to as imparting sanctity to the marriage tie. A comparison between the *Choephoroi* of Æschylus and the *Hamlet* of Shakspeare may serve to exhibit more strikingly the fundamental difference between the ancient and modern drama. In both tragedies the father of the hero has been murdered, and the mother has married the murderer; in both, the son is urged by supernatural visitations to avenge the crime, and both are prompted by the same motives of disappointed ambition. In the ancient drama, however, the death of Agamemnon is represented as the vindication of a moral principle, violated in the person of Clytemnestra. Accordingly, when pleading for her life, she not only appeals to the filial reverence of her son, but also represents herself as having, by the death of her husband, accomplished the ends of divine justice. In the modern drama the murder of the king is represented as an act of pure wickedness; hence when *Hamlet* is summoned to avenge his father's death, no external object which claims his reverence intervenes to check his purpose. The hesitancy must, therefore, come from within; accordingly the collision is found not in opposing moral principles, but in the personal character of *Hamlet*. His soul is not organized to perpetrate this deed of horror, consequently wavering in his resolution, and overwhelmed with disgust at the world and at life, he perishes in the consummation of his revenge. So marvellous is the skill with which the character of *Hamlet* is drawn, so ab-

sorbing the interest which it awakens, that in studying it we are apt to forget the fundamental idea which underlies the drama—the *dénouement* of which, like that of the several members of the *Oresteia*, sets forth the great law of retribution, and vindicates the moral order of the Divine government.

In the third member of the trilogy, the poet, while making his drama subservient to objects connected with the political state of Athens, nevertheless subordinates these local interests to the exposition of higher truth. Among these political objects the most important was the defence of the Areopagus, the existence of which was threatened by the growing ascendancy of the democracy. It would be difficult to imagine a more impressive means of recommending this tribunal to the reverence of the Athenians than thus to introduce the celestial powers as assisting at its inauguration. Of far higher significance, however, is the ethical conception which underlies the drama. The word *Erinnys* in Greek has been defined to mean "the feeling of deep offence, of bitter displeasure, when sacred rights belonging to us are impiously violated by persons who ought most to have respected them." These vengeance-prompting feelings, personified as active, ever-wakeful spirits, became associated with the great Nature power, *Demeter*, under her more malignant aspect, and hence arose the worship of the dread goddess, *Demeter-Erinnys*. Both these names have been traced back to the Sanscrit; the Greek *Demeter* being identified with *Dyāvā Mātār*, the Mother, corresponding to *Dyaus Pitar*, the Father, and the *Erinnyes* being identified with the Sanscrit *Saranyū*. Thus it appears that the venerable goddesses, like *Zeus* and *Athena*, have their root in the Vedas. "In early Greek mythology they were attributed more especially to the Father, the Mother, and the Elder Brother, whenever their sacred rights had been impiously violated." They are thus introduced in the *Iliad* (ix. 449; ix. 572; xv. 204), where they are represented as avenging any violation of the natural order.

In this character they also appear at the conclusion of the *Choephoroi*, and in the opening scenes of the *Eumenides*, where, like blood-thirsty hounds, they pursue *Orestes* for the murder of his mother; they take cognizance only of the outward act, and

exercise their functions with the inflexibility of natural law. They would not the less have claimed him as their prey had he left unavenged the murder of his father (Choe. 283, 911). In this fatal collision Athena appears as umpire: by establishing the court of Areopagus she proclaims the great principle, "that the highest tribunal upon earth is the collective conscience of humanity."* The cause is tried before this august assembly; righteous regard is had for the special circumstances of the deed; Orestes is acquitted, the sanctity of the primeval goddesses is recognized; their wrath is appeased, and thus the intuitive thirst for revenge is transmuted into the principle of eternal justice. Thus the drama of the Eumenides exhibits, under one of its grandest phases, the contest between the Titans and the Olympian gods, issuing in the triumph of free will and moral power over blind instinct and necessity, while the transmutation of the Erinnys into the Eumenides symbolizes the profound thought that even the instinctive tendencies in human nature are implanted there by its divine Author, and consequently that man's highest well-being demands, not their suppression or annihilation, but their harmonious subordination to the higher faculties of the soul.

Classical poetry affords the true key to classic art; it is, therefore, interesting to turn from the study of Æschylus to the contemplation of the Parthenon, where the Athenians beheld translated into marble the same profound ideas which the great dramatist has embodied in his immortal works. Thus the sculptures of the eastern pediment, having reference to the birth of Athena, indicate, by the presence of the Fates and other divine personages, the deep significance attached by the sculptor to the manifestation of Divine Wisdom, in the person of the Virgin Goddess; while in the grand composition of the western pediment, which set forth the contention of Poseidon and Athena for supremacy over the country of Attica, we trace, as in the Eumenides, the association of interests purely local and national, with truths of higher significance. Thus the contending divinities have been regarded as typifying the antagonism

* Gott in der Geschichte, Bunsen.

between agricultural and maritime pursuits, which formed one main feature of Athenian life; and also as reflecting the conflicting powers of land and sea, as exhibited in the topography of the interior and the coast.* I doubt not, however, that there rose also before the mental vision of Phidias the grand old allegory of the battle between the Titans and the Gods, which may be regarded as the mythical expression of that eternal struggle between the lower and higher elements of being, of which the drama of the Eumenides affords so impressive and magnificent a symbol: this hypothesis appears the more plausible when we consider the intimate mythological connection which obtained between Poseidon and Demeter-Erinnys.

Another most interesting illustration of the intimate association which, in classical times, existed between poetry and her sister arts is to be found in the paintings of Polygnotus in the Lesche at Delphi, of which a minute description is given by Pausanias, and which have been admirably restored by Fr. and Joh. Riepenhausen.† The first picture exhibits the capture of Ilium, the desecration of her sanctuaries, and brings before the mental eye the outrage committed against Athena in the person of Cassandra, thus setting forth the origin of the disasters which befel the returning armament of the Greeks: it would be impossible for the beholders of this picture not to recall the speech of Clytemnestra in the Agamemnon (320), in which she forcibly describes the contrast between the state of victors and vanquished in the captured city, the desolation of which is touchingly symbolized in the painting by the empty cuirass that lies on the altar to which a child is clinging. The exhibition of the very crimes so earnestly deprecated by the poet (330), prepares the mind for the second picture, exhibiting the descent of Ulysses to Hades, to learn from the prophet the means by which a safe return might be secured. The punishment of the sacrilegious Tityus, and the retaliation on the undutiful son, could not fail to

* Explanation of the groups in the Western Pediment of the Parthenon. Classical Museum. W. Watkiss Lloyd.

† On the paintings of Polygnotus in the Lesche at Delphi. Classical Museum, vol. i. W. Watkiss Lloyd.

suggest to the mind of the spectator those passages of the Eumenides in which the poet, with terrible earnestness, describes the direful fate which in the lower regions is the sure award of filial impiety and sacrilege (260).

The schools of design which are springing up throughout the length and breadth of the land bear witness to the importance which is now attached to artistic culture in England.

It must not be forgotten, however, that imagination constitutes the vital principle of art; that the practised eye and well-trained hand are powerless except as instruments to embody the conceptions of the creative mind. Hence the study of poetry acquires new significance, not only as throwing light upon the master-works of classical antiquity, the recognized models of ideal form, but also as enriching the imagination, while at the same time it opens both eye and soul to discern the familiar beauty of common life.

What Joubert has said of Plato may be applied with equal truth to poetry:—"Platon ne fait rien voir, mais il éclaire, il met de la lumière dans nos yeux, et place en nous une clarté, dont tous les objets deviennent ensuite illuminés. Comme l'air des montagnes sa lecture aiguise les organes, et donne le goût des bons aliments."

"Of imagination, fancy, taste, of the highest cultivation in all its forms, this great nation has abundance; of industry, skill, perseverance, mechanical contrivance, it has a yet larger stock, which overflows our narrow bounds and floods the world. The one great want is to bring these two groups of qualities harmoniously together."* I believe that in poetry will be found one of the missing links through whose agency this alliance between the spheres of beauty and utility is to be consummated. Milton speaks of "the glorious, the magnificent, uses which may be made of poetry both in divine and human things;" while Shelley characterised it, as "a fountain for ever flowing with the waters of wisdom and delight." It becomes, therefore, a question of deep national interest to consider by what agencies these renovating and purifying influences may be diffused, and brought home to the heart of this great nation. From Greece, "the

* Wedgwood, an address by the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.

fountain of all instruction in matters of art," we may perhaps take a hint as to one large and important department of national education.

In this connection I am tempted to quote a passage from Grote's History of Greece, where, after alluding to the abundance in the productions of the tragic muse, at Athens, he proceeds:—"All this abundance found its way to the minds of the great body of the citizens, not excepting even the poorest. So powerful a body of poetic influence has probably never been brought to act upon the emotions of any other population; and when we consider the extraordinary beauty of these immortal compositions, which first stamped tragedy as a separate department of poetry, and gave to it a dignity never since reached, we shall be satisfied that the tastes, the sentiments, and the intellectual standard of the Athenian multitude must have been sensibly improved and exalted by such lessons. The reception of such pleasures through the eye and ear, as well as amidst a sympathizing crowd, was a fact of no small importance in the mental history of Athens. It contributed to exalt their imagination, like the grand edifices and ornaments added during the same period to their Acropolis."

The designs of Flaxman from Homer and Æschylus are wrought into our damask and engraved upon our glass; it is time that the thoughts of the great poets, from whom he drew his inspiration, should be brought home, with all their rich treasure of imagery to the hearts and minds of our people. What noble entertainment might not be drawn from "Heroic poems and Attic tragedies of stateliest and most regal ornament," if, appealing as they do to the feelings of our common humanity they were made appreciable to the popular understanding by illustrations drawn from history and art!

With reference to the moral influence of poetry, Joubert says, "Voulez-vous connaître la morale? Lisez les poètes; ce qui vous plaît chez-eux, approfondissez-le; c'est le vrai; ils doivent être la grande étude du philosophe qui veut connaître l'homme."

Believing that Æschylus strikingly corroborates this utterance, in all humility, I offer to the public this version of his greatest work.

•

A G A M E M N O N.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

WATCHMAN.
CHORUS OF ARGIVE ELDERS.
CLYTEMNESTRA.
THE HERALD TALTHYBIUS.
AGAMEMNON.
CASSANDRA.
ÆGISTHUS.

[SCENE.—*The royal palace in ARGOS, the area in front adorned with statues of the gods. In the foreground an altar of APOLLO. The city, the mountains, and the sea, are seen in the distance over the building. The orchestra represents the agora of the city, and is adorned with statues of ZEUS, of APOLLO, of HERMES, and of other gods and heroes.*]

AGAMEMNON.



[*The WATCHMAN is discovered reclining on the flat roof
of the palace.*]

WATCHMAN.

I PRAY the gods deliv'rance from these toils,
This year-long watch, which, prone on Atreus' roof
With head ensconced in arm, dog-like, I keep,
Marking the confluence of nightly stars;
And those bright potentates who bring to men
Winter and Summer, signal in the sky,
† Both in their wane I view and when they rise.
And for the beacon's token now I watch,
The blaze of fire, bearing from Troy a tale,
† Tidings of capture ; for so proudly hopes 10
A woman's heart, with manly counsel fraught.
Dew-drench'd and restless is my nightly couch,
By dreams unvisited, for at my side,
In place of Sleep stands Fear, and doth forbid,
Save in unquiet rest, my lids to close;

† The obelisks refer to the conjectural emendations of the text at the end of each drama.

Then when I think to chant a strain, or whistle,
(Such against sleep my tuneful counter-charm,)
Moaning, I wail the sorrows of this house,
Not wisely govern'd, as in days of old.

*[He suddenly beholds the beacon-light,
and starts to his feet.]*

But now, glad respite from these toils be mine, 20
Since fire, joy's herald, through the darkness gleams.
Hail, lamp of night, forth shining like the day,
Of many a festive dance in Argos' land,
Through joy at this event, the harbinger.

Hurrah! Hurrah! To Agamemnon's queen,
Thus with shrill cry, I give th' appointed sign,
That from her couch up-rising, with all speed,
She in the palace jubilant may lift
The joyous shout, to gratulate this torch,
If Ilion's citadel in truth is ta'en,
As, shining forth, this beacon-fire proclaims. 30

The joyous prelude I myself will dance,
For I shall score good fortune to my lords,
Now that this torch hath cast me triple six.
Well! be it mine, when comes this mansion's lord,
With this my hand, his much-loved hand to grasp!

The rest I speak not; o'er my tongue hath passed
An ox with heavy tread: the house itself,
Had it a voice, would tell the tale full clear;
And I, with those who know, am fain to speak,
With others, who know nothing, I forget.

[Exit.]

[Enter in rank and file the Chorus of ARGIVE elders, each leaning on his staff; during their slow and measured advance they sing the following Ode, the conclusion of which brings them in front of the stage.]

Chorus.

Lo the tenth year rolls apace 40
 Since Priam's mighty challenger,
 Lord Menelas and Atreus' heir,
 Stalwart Atridæ,—by Heaven's grace
 Twin-throned, twin-sceptred,—o'er the sea
 Steer'd hence the Argive chivalry,
 Their warrior crews a thousand galleys bare.

Fierce battle clang'd they from their breast,
 Like vultures, which, through paths of air,
 Scream, wheeling o'er their empty nest,
 By oarage of strong pennons driven, 50
 Missing the eyrie-watching care
 Of callow fledglings; but from heaven,
 Apollo, Pan, or Zeus, doth lend
 An ear attentive to the cry,
 Shrill-voiced, of birds, who share their sky,
 And doth upon the guilty send
 Erinnyes, late-avenging pest.

And so for her, by many woo'd,
 Doth Zeus, protector of the guest,
 'Gainst Paris send th' Atridan brood, 60
 And strife limb-wearying, knees earth-press'd,
 The spear-shaft, rudely snap in twain
 In war's initial battle,—these

Alike for Greeks and Trojans he decrees.
 As matters stand, they stand ; the yet to be
 Must issue as ordain'd by destiny,
 For neither groans, nor lustral rain,
 Nor tear-drops, can the wrath appease
 Of violated sanctities.

70

But we, unhonour'd, age-oppress'd,
 In that array uncounted, rest
 Upon these staves our child-like frame ;
 In childhood and in age, the same,
 Life's current feebly sways the breast.
 His station Ares holds no more,
 Decrepit Eld, like phantom of the day,
 Powerless as infancy, with leafage hoar,
 Treads his three-footed way.

80

[During the foregoing Ode, a female train bearing sacred vessels issues from the palace ; CLYTEMNESTRA appears to offer sacrifice. The stage and orchestra exhibit the spectacle of altars blazing with flames fed with oil. The Chorus sings the following Ode as it advances to take up its usual position round the altar of ZEUS, adorned with a statue of the god.]

But royal Clytemnestra, thou
 Tyndarus' daughter, what hast heard,
 Confiding in what tidings now
 Sendest thou round the altar-kindling word ?
 Of all the gods who guard the state,
 Whether Olympian, or of realms below,
 Or on our mart who kindly wait,
 With gifts the altars glow.

90

Now here, now there, bright flames arise,
 Streaming aloft to reach the skies,
 Charm'd with pure unguent's soothing spell,
 And with the cake of sacrifice,
 Guileless and suasive, from the royal cell.
 What here 'tis lawful to declare,
 What may be told proclaim;
 Be healer of this care
 Which now a lowering form doth wear, 100
 Till fawning Hope, from out the flame
 Of sacrifice, with gentle smile
 Doth rankling grief's soul-gnawing pang beguile.

[While CLYTEMNESTRA offers sacrifice, the following Ode is sung by the Chorus from the altar of ZEUS.]

The way-side augury 'tis mine to sing,*
 Of mighty men the doom fore-shadowing,
 (For Heaven itself doth prompt my waning powers,
 And with persuasive song the old man dowers,)
 How he, the feather'd king,
 Sends forth to Teucer's land,
 With spear and vengeful hand,
 Achaia's twin-throned Might, 110
 'Neath whose joint sceptre Hellas' sons unite.
 Toward spear-hand, the palace near,
 Perch'd lofty, manifest to sight,
 The bird-kings to the navy-kings appear,
 One black of tail, one white;

* The original being here in oracular style is purposely obscure, and cannot be fitly rendered otherwise in the translation.

A hare with embryo young, in evil hour,
 Amerc'd of future courses, they devour.

Chant the dirge, uplift the wail !

But may the right prevail !

120

Then the sagacious army-seer, aware,
 How diverse-minded the Atridan kings,
 In the hare-renders sees the martial pair,
 And thus, the augury expounding, sings ;—

“ In time this progress captures Troy,

But first the city's gather'd store,

The people's wealth, shall fate destroy.

But from no god may hatred sore

Becloud the mighty curb, 'gainst Ilion forged !* 130

For Artemis beholds, in wrathful mood,

Her father's wingèd hounds, with murder gorged,

Rending the trembler with her embryo brood ;

And doth the eagles' meal abhor.

Chant the dirge, uplift the wail !

But may the right prevail !

†“ So dear to Artemis, the tender brood
 Of harmless young that from the swelling teat,
 Be they of gentle or of savage mood,
 In glade and forest draw their nurture sweet ! 140

† Apollo, healer, thee I supplicate,

Let not to us the huntress bring

Dire ship-detaining blasts and adverse skies,

Preluding other sacrifice,

Lawless, unfestive, natal spring

* By a harsh metaphor the Greek army is called a curb
 forged against Troy.

Of feudful jar, and mortal hate,
By husband-fear unawed.
For child-avenging wrath, with fear and fraud,
Dread palace-warden, doth untiring wait." 150
Presaging from the way-side birds what Fate
Hung o'er the royal house, the seer
Peal'd forth his bodeful song;
Successes high, commingled with dark fear
Before his vision throng.
He weighs the adverse, the auspicious signs,*
The issue thoughtfully divines,
And prays fulfilment of the omens fair.
Concordant with his prayer,
Chant the dirge, uplift the wail!
But may the right prevail!
Zeus, whoe'er he be, this name
If his sov'reign will do claim,
By this title I address;
Weighing all, no power I know
Save Zeus, if I aside would throw 164
This groundless burthen of distress.
He who mighty was of yore,†
With all-defying boldness rife,
†Whate'er he was, avails no more.
The next, thrice vanquished in the strife,
Hath also pass'd; but who the victor-strain
To Zeus uplifts, true insight shall obtain.

* I follow Dindorf in transposing this line.

† The combatants probably are Uranus, father of Cronus,
and Cronus, father of Zeus.

To sober thought Zeus paves the way, 170
 And wisdom links with pain.
 In sleep the anguish of remember'd ill
 Drops on the troubled heart; against their will,
 Rebellious men are tutor'd to be wise;
 †A grace I ween of the divinities,
 Who mortals from their holy seats arraign.

E'en so the elder chief of Hellas' train,
 No seer upbraiding, bow'd, with grief suppress'd,
 His soul to Fortune's stroke; what time the host,
 In front of Chalcis, tossing off the coast 180
 Of wave-vex'd Aulis, linger'd, sore-distress'd,
 While gales, store-wasting, barr'd them from the main.

Blasts, fraught with hunger and delay
 And evil-anchorage, from Strymon sweep,—
 Ruin to mortals; with malignant power,
 Ruthless to ships and cordage, they
 Doubling the sojourn in the deep
 Wither the Grecian flower. 190
 But when in Dian's name, the seer
 Peal'd forth a remedy more drear
 For the fell tempest; the Atridan twain,
 Smiting on earth their sceptres, strove in vain
 To quell the rising tear.

Then spake the elder chief; to disobey
 Is hard, hard too if I my child must slay, 200
 My home's fair treasure;—doom severe,—
 With streams of virgin gore, the altar near,

Staining a father's hands!
Oh, bitter choice! The fleet can I betray,
Failing the leaguèd bands?
Fiercely to crave the storm-allaying spell,
The virgin's blood,—is just. May all be well! 210

Then harness'd in Necessity's stern yoke
Within his breast there woke
Tempest profane, unhallow'd, evil-fraught,
His soul perverting to all daring thought.
For frenzy, that from primal woe doth spring,
Hardens mankind to deeds of ill;
Thus, arm'd in woman's cause, the king
In sacrifice his daughter dared to kill;
The fleet's initial rite accomplishing.

Her prayers, her cries of "Father," her young life 220
Were nought to those stern umpires, breathing strife:
So when her sire had pray'd,
The ministers he bade,

†Stooping, with steelèd hearts, to lift the maid
Robe-tangled, and like kid for sacrifice,
To raise high o'er the altar; and lest cries
Should 'scape her lovely lips, or sound of pain
Ill-omen'd to the house, he bade restrain
Her mouth's fair portal with a forceful rein.

Then letting fall her veil of saffron dye, 230
She smote, with glances from her tearful eye,
Each murderer; while, passing fair,
†Like to a pictured image, voiceless there,

Strove she to speak; for oft in other days,
 Gracing her father's hospitable halls,
 She with chaste voice had caroll'd forth his praise,
 What time the walls
 Rang to the Pæan's sound,
 With third libation crown'd.

What next befel I know not, nor relate;
 Not unfulfill'd were Calchas' words of fate. 240

For Justice doth ordain
 Wisdom to buy at cost of pain.

Why seek to read the future? Let it go!
 Since dawns the issue clear with dawning day,
 What boots it to forestal our date of woe?
 But be the future blest! For so must pray
 Of Apia's land this one sole guard and stay.

Hail Clytemnestra! Hither am I come
 Thy majesty revering. For 'tis meet
 When the male throne is empty, that we pay 250
 To our high captain's consort honour due.
 If thou hast heard auspicious news, or not,
 That with joy-vouching hope thou lightest up
 The altar-fires, I, as a friend, would know,—
 Yet shall thy silence nought unkind be deem'd.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Joy's harbinger be radiant Morning, born
 From kindly mother Night! So runs the saw.
 But thou of joy beyond all hope shalt hear,
 For Priam's city have the Argives won.

Chorus.

How queen ! through unbelief I miss thy word.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Troy is in Argive hands ; now speak I plain ? 260

Chorus.

Joy, stealing o'er my heart, calls forth the tear.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

True, thy bright eye thy loyalty bewrays.

Chorus.

Of these great tidings what the certain proof ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Warrant I have ;—how not ? or Heaven deceives me.

Chorus.

Trusting, perchance, the augury of dreams ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The fancies of the sleep-bound soul I heed not.

Chorus.

But hath some wingless rumour buoy'd thee up ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou chidest me as were I a young girl.

Chorus.

But since what time was Priam's city spoil'd ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

This very night now bringing forth the day. 270

Chorus.

What messenger could travel with such speed ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hephaestus, sending forth Idaian fire.
 Hither through swift relays of courier-flame,
 Beacon transmitted beacon. Ida first
 To the Hermaean rock on Lemnos' Isle ;
 Thence Athos' summits, dedicate to Zeus,
 The third in order, caught the mighty glow ;
 Towering aloft, the pine-blaze, like the sun,
 †Gold-beaming, bridging in its might the sea,
 Transmits the splendour of the advancing fire
 To bold Macistus' watch-tow'rs ; he in turn, 280
 Without delay, nor overpower'd by sleep,
 The courier's duty faithfully discharged ;
 The torch, far-gleaming to Euripus' stream,
 Gives signal to Messapus' sentinels.
 Firing of withered heath a giant pile,
 They kindle and send on the courier light ;
 The stalwart flame, unwearied and undimm'd,
 Like a bright moon, o'erleaps Asopus' plain,
 And wakens, on Cithaeron's lofty height,
 Another speeder of the fiery post. 290
 The warder hailing the far-journeying fire,
 Kindles a beacon whose surpassing glow
 Darts its bright radiance o'er Gorgopis' lake,
 And summons Aigioplanctus' mountain height
 Forward to hurl unrent the fiery chain.
 With vigour unimpair'd they onward send,
 Kindled anew, a mighty beard of flame ;
 Crossing from far the crag whose pinnacles
 †Peer o'er the gulf Saronic spread beneath,—

The blaze, alighting on Arachnæ's height, 300
 The city's nearest beacon, reach'd its goal ;
 Thence to the roof of Atreus' son this light
 Darted,—true scion of Idaian fire.
 Thus in succession, flame awakening flame
 Fulfill'd the order of the fiery course :
 The first and last are victors in the race.
 Such is the proof, the warrant that I give
 Of tidings sent me by my Lord from Troy.

Chorus.

The gods, O queen, will I invoke hereafter.
 But now I fain would marvel at thy words,
 Heard more at large so thou wouldst speak again. 310

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Troy on this very day th' Achæians hold.
 I ween ill-blending clamour fills the town ;
 Pour in one vessel vinegar and oil,
 They will not lovingly consort, I trow.
 So now from captives and from captors rise
 Two voices, telling of their two-fold fate.
 Those, bending o'er the bodies of their slain,—
 Husbands and brothers, orphans o'er their sires,
 With neck no longer free, bewail their dead ; 320
 While *these*, night-stragglers after toilsome fight,
 Keen for all viands that the city yields,
 Upon no order standing, but as each
 Hath snatch'd the lot of fortune, take their fill.
 At length from frost and skiey dews set free,
 They dwell in Ilion's spear-won halls, and sleep

†The live-long night, unsentinell'd like gods.
 If now the tutelary powers they fear,
 Who hold the conquer'd land, and spare their shrines, 330
 The victors shall not vanquish'd be in turn.
 But may no greedy passion seize the host
 To covet things unlawful, smit with gain.
 A safe return has yet to be secur'd,
 And half the double course is yet to run ;
 But if in sacrilege the host return,
 Wakeful may rise the sorrows of the slain
 For vengeance, though no sudden ill befall.
 These words from me, a woman, thou hast heard ;
 But may the good in overpoise prevail ! 340
 For with rich off'rings I have won this joy.

Chorus.

Like prudent man well hast thou spoken, lady.—
 But now that I thy certain proofs have heard,
 Duly I turn to invoke the gods,
 For no unworthy meed requites our toil.
 Hail, sovereign Zeus, and friendly Night,
 Mistress of mighty glories, Hail !
 Hurl'd is the net o'er Troya's height,
 That neither age nor youth avail 350
 To overleap ; in hopeless thrall
 Vast ruin captures all.
 Zeus, guardian of the guest,
 Thee I adore ;—
 Wrought were those deeds at thy behest.
 The bow thou didst of yore

'Gainst Alexander strain,
That nor too early nor too late,
Nor shooting o'er the stars elate,
The shaft might light in vain.

That Zeus hath smote them we may trace ;
As he had plann'd, he shaped the end ; 360
Yet gods supernal (some pretend)
Heed not when men their sanctities deface.
Such miscreant doth kindred claim
With reprobates, a godless race,
†Breathing fierce war's unhallow'd flame.
Wealth in excess breeds mischief, and o'erturns
The balance of the constant mind ; 370
No tower of strength shall he in riches find
Who Justice' mighty altar rudely spurns.

For Frenzy, fraught with deadly bane
To unborn ages, sways the recreant will ;
Against the mischief cure is vain ;
Baleful shines forth the flagrant ill ; 380
Like spurious coin, his metal base
Use and the touchstone bring to light,
Who, boy-like, to a wingèd bird gives chase,
And whelms his native soil in hopeless night.
His orisons the gods disclaim,
But sweep to doom the sinful wight
Practised in guile ;—thus Paris came
To Atreus' halls ;—The friendly board 390
He shamed, the consort luring from her lord.

Bequeathing to her people deadly stour
 Of spear, of shield, and ships' array,
 And Ilion's ruin bearing as her dower,
 Swift through the gates she took her way,
 Daring what none may dare ;—with many a wail,
 The palace seers peal'd forth the tale.

“Alas the royal line, the princely house ! 400
 Alas the couch,—the trace of her once true !”
 Dishonour'd, yet without rebuke, the spouse
 Stands speechless, yearning still her form to view
 Lost o'er the salt sea wave : his dreamy pain
 Conjures her phantom in his home to reign.
 He loathes the sculptor's plastic skill
 Which living grace belies ;
 Not Aphrodite's self can still
 The hunger of his eyes.

And dreamy fancies, coinage of the brain, 410
 Come o'er the troubled heart with vain delight ;
 For rapture deem I vain,
 When forms beloved in visions of the night,
 With changeful aspect, mock our grasp, and sweep
 On noiseless wing adown the paths of sleep.
 Such sorrows o'er the hearth brood evermore,
 And woes o'ertowering these. The warrior train
 Comrades in danger, steer'd from Hellas' shore,
 Leaving in Hellas' homes heart-withering pain ;
 For many sorrows rankle at the core. 420

Each household keeps in faithful ken
The loved ones to the battle sent ;
But back receives, for living men,
Their arms and ashes, sad equivalent.

For Mars, who traffics not in gold,
But flesh of man, the scales doth hold
In battle of the spear.

From Ilion, back to sorrowing friends,
Rich dust, fire-purified, he sends,
And wash'd with many a tear.

To their embrace, hearsed in sepulchral urn,
Ashes, not men, return.

430

Weeping, each hero's praise they tell ;
How one excell'd in strife ;
And how in war one nobly fell,
Waged for another's wife.

Breathing such murmurs, jealous hate
Doth on the Atridan champions wait.

Achaïans, cast in fairest mould,
Entomb'd 'neath Ilion's wall,

The foughten shore now firmly hold,
The hostile sod their pall.

440

Direful the people's voice attuned to hate,
As ban of public doom.

Anxious of heart I now await

What night still shrouds in gloom ;
For blind to deeds of blood the gods are not.
In Time the gloomy brood of Night
With slow eclipse reverse his lot,

Who Fortune reareth in despite
 Of Justice. Reft of succour lies 450
 The man whom Heav'n abandons. Men's loud praise
 Is bodeful ever ; 'gainst their eyes
 Zeus hurls his blinding rays.
 But may ungrudged success be mine !
 No city-spoiler let me be !
 Nor, subject to another, pine
 Myself in slavery.

Borne by the joy-announcing flame
 Swift through the town the tidings fly ; 460
 But whether true who may proclaim,
 Or not a heavenly lie ?
 For who so childish, so distraught,
 To warm his spirit at the beacon's glow,
 When other news, with evil fraught,
 His joy may change to woe ?
 'Tis woman's way the boon, ere seen, to prize ;
 Too credulous, her fancy open lies
 To rumour's rapid inroad, but the fame 470
 Publish'd by women quickly dies.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Soon shall we know whether the signal fires,
 The swift relays of courier-light be true,
 Or whether, dreamlike, they beguiled our minds
 With grateful splendour ;—Yonder, from the coast,
 A herald comes, shaded with laurel boughs ;
 While Clay's twin-brother, thirsty Dust, attests
 That neither voiceless, nor the mountain pine

Illuming, will he tell a tale in smoke ; 480
No,—either will his voice announce more joy,
Or,—but ill-omen'd words I deprecate.
Be omens fair with fair assurance crown'd !

Chorus.

May he who 'gainst the state breathes other prayer,
First reap the fruit of his malignant thought.

[*Enter Herald.*]

Herald.

Oh soil of Argos, oh my native land,
In light of this tenth year to thee I come ;
While many a hope hath fail'd me, this survives,
For ne'er I counted, dying here, to share
Belovèd sepulture in Argive soil. 490
Now hail, O earth, bright sunlight, hail, and Zeus,

[*Here the Herald salutes the statues of
the gods in the orchestra.*]

Supreme o'er Argos, thou too, Pythian king,
With thy fell darts assailing us no more ;—
Let it suffice that on Scamander's banks
Thy mien was hostile ;—here, Apollo, lord,
Be thou the Saviour,—be the Healer, thou !
Ye Gods of Council, all, I now invoke,
Thee, my protector, Hermes, Herald dear,
Glory of Heralds ;—Heroes, demigods,
Who sent us on our way, now welcome back,
Propitious, this poor remnant of the spear. 500

[*He turns to the stage.*]

Hail royal palace ! roofs belovèd, hail !
 Ye seats august, ye powers that front the sun,
 If e'er of yore, now, with those cheerful eyes
 Receive in state the monarch absent long,
 For he returns from darkness, bringing light
 Common to you and all assembled here,
 Lord Agamemnon ; welcome, as beseems,
 Him who with mattock of avenging Zeus
 Hath Ilion razed, her under-soil upturn.
 Quench'd are the fanes, the altars of the gods, 510
 And of the total land the seed is crush'd.
 Such yoke round Troy hath Atreus' elder son
 Fasten'd, and lo ! blest by the gods, he comes
 Of living men most worthy of renown.
 Nor Paris now, nor his accomplice-state,
 Their crime may vaunt as greater than their woe.
 Cast in a suit for rapine and for theft,
 His surety forfeit, he to utter doom
 Hath mov'd his natal home. Thus Priam's sons
 With twofold forfeit have atoned their crime. 520

Chorus.

Hail to thee, herald of Achaia's host !

Herald.

So please the gods, I grudge not now to die.

Chorus.

Love for thy native land hath tried thy heart ?

Herald.

So tried that from mine eyes fall tears of joy.

Chorus.

Sweet the heart-sickness that o'ercame you thus.

Herald.

The key I lack which may thy words unlock.

Chorus.

Smit with desire for those who long'd for you.

Herald.

Hath Argos, then, yearn'd for the yearning host?

Chorus.

Ay, so that oft from darken'd soul I groan'd.

Herald.

Whence this sad gloom, abhorrent to the host? 530

Chorus.

Silence I long have held bale's safest cure.

Herald.

How! Fearedst aught in absence of thy lords?

Chorus.

To die was oft my wish as whilom thine.

Herald.

Well ended, all is well. In lapse of time
Happy and adverse lot must intermix;
For who, save gods, may boast of lengthen'd years
Free from disastrous chance? Were I to tell
The hardships, toils, and perils of the ship,
Whence, seldom landing, wretched was our couch,
†What hour exempt from service and from groans? 540

More bitter still our life upon the shore,
 For, couch'd on hostile soil, outside the walls,
 Dank vapours drizzled from the meads and sky,
 Our raiment's canker, tricking us as beasts
 With shaggy hair ;—or were I to describe
 Bird-killing Winter's over-matching cold,
 From snows of Ida born, or Summer's heat,
 When stretch'd on breathless noon-day couch, the sea
 Slumber'd without a wave. But why lament ?
 Past is the toil ;—past also for the dead, 550
 Who ne'er will trouble them again to rise.
 Why call the spectral army-roll ? and why,
 Living, bemoan reverses ? Nay, I claim
 With many a farewell to salute mischance.
 For us, the remnant of the Argive host,
 Joy triumphs, nor can Sorrow tilt the scale.
 Winging o'er land and sea our homeward flight,
 We to the sun-light well may make this boast,
 "The Argive host, captors at length of Troy, 560
 These spoils, an offering to Achaia's gods,
 Hang up, bright glory of their ancient shrines."
 Whoso the tidings hears must needs extol
 The leaders and the state ; praise too shall greet
 Jove's consummating grace. My tale is told.

Chorus.

Ungrudged surrender yield I to thy words.
 Age still is young enough for grateful lore.
 But Atreus' halls and Clytemnestra most
 These news concern ; me also they enrich.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Long since the shout of jubilee I raised, 570
 What time the mighty messenger of fire
 First told of Ilion captured and o'erthrown.
 Who was it then that taunting ask'd, "Dost think,
 Trusting the beacon-light, that Troy is sack'd?
 Women in sooth are easily elate."
 By such bold utt'rance was my wit misprised:
 Yet still I sacrificed and through the town,
 With woman's note they tuned the joyous trill,
 Pæans uplifting in the gods' abodes,
 The while the fragrant incense-flames expired. 580
 And now, what need that thou shouldst tell me more?
 I from the king himself the tale shall hear.
 Myself will hasten now to welcome home,
 With honour due, my venerated lord;
 What sight for woman sweeter than the day
 Which to her spouse, Heaven-shielded, from the fight
 Throws wide the gates? Then hither bid my lord,
 Beloved of Argos, to return with speed.
 Arriving, he will find a faithful wife,
 Such as he left her, watch-dog of his house, 590
 To him devoted, hostile to his foes,
 In all points like herself, no single seal
 Through these long years invaded by her hand.
 To me, ill-fame, or trespass 'gainst his love
 Is foreign as the dyer's hue to brass.
 A boast like this, fraught as it is with truth,
 The lip misseems not of a high-born dame.

[Exit CLYTEMNESTRA.]

Chorus.

Behold ! The queen herself hath tutor'd thee ;
Decorous words her clear interpreters.
But tell me, Herald, touching Menelas,
Doth he in safety homeward with the host
Hither return, prince to his country dear ?

Herald.

False news were I to tell, in flatt'ring terms,
Not long would friends enjoy the fair deceit.

Chorus.

Mightest thou speak auspicious words yet true !
That here they sunder'd are is all too plain.

Herald.

The man is vanish'd from th' Achaian host ;
Himself and galley. No untruth I tell.

Chorus.

Steering ahead from Troy ? or hath a storm,
A common terror, snatched him from the host ? 610

Herald.

Like skilful archer thou hast hit the mark ;
And hast in brief declared a mighty woe.

Chorus.

Say, doth the voice of other mariners
Report of him as living, or as dead ?

Herald.

Not one so knoweth as to speak his doom,
Save the bright Sun, feeder of teeming earth.

Chorus.

How! Burst the tempest on the naval host
Through anger of the gods? say, what the end?

Herald.

To sully with ill news a day of joy
Suits not; the honour of the gods forbids. 620
When messenger, sad-visaged, tidings dire
Of routed armies to the city bears,
A common wound inflicting on the state,
While many men from many homes are bann'd,
Smit by the twofold scourge which Ares loves,
Twin-spear'd Calamity, a gory pair;—
Whoso is laden with such sorrows, he
The pæan of the Furies well may raise.
But I, glad herald to a prosperous state
Of victory achieved, foul news with fair 630
How can I mingle, telling of the storm
Charg'd with heav'n's wrath against the Achaian fleet?
For fire and ocean, direst foes of yore,
Together leagued, plighted alliance dread,
Whelming Achaia's luckless armament.
Then rose by night, dire perils of the deep.
Beneath the Thracian blasts ship against ship
Dash'd wildly; mid the storm of pelting rain,
The fleet, sore-butted, vanish'd from my eyes,
Whirl'd by its shepherd dire, the fierce typhoon. 640
And when at length uprose the sun's fair light,
Behold the Ægean sea bestudded o'er

With wrecks of Grecian men and shattered barks.
 Us, and our vessel with undamaged hull,
 Some god, I ween, (not mortal was the power,)
 Ruling the helm, hath saved, by stealth or prayer.
 But Saviour Fortune lighted on our ship,
 Which neither stranded on the rockbound coast,
 Nor on her cables resting, felt the surge.
 Then safe at last, from watery Hades snatch'd, 650
 In genial daylight, still mistrusting chance,
 With anxious thought we brooded o'er new grief;
 Our host sore wearied, and in evil plight.
 And doubtless now, if any still survive,
 They speak of us as dead. Why should they not?
 As we imagine a like fate for them.
 But may the best befall! For Menelas,
 Foremost and chief, expect him to arrive;
 If any sunbeam knows of him as safe,
 Rejoicing in the light, (through the device 660
 Of Zeus, not willing yet the race to overwhelm,)
 Good hope there is that he may yet return.
 Hearing this tale, know, thou the Truth hast heard.

Chorus.

Who, oh who, with truest aim,
 (Haply some prescient power, from gaze
 Of man conceal'd, the tongue who sways,)
 Did the battle-wedded dame,
 Prize of conflict, Helen name?
 Helen, the captor, who, elate, 670
 Should ships, and men, and cities captivate.

From Hymen's curtain'd bower she fled.
While Titan zephyr swell'd her sail,
Swift on her galley's viewless trail,
Full many a shielded hunter sped,
Till, in a quarrel red with gore,
Their barks they moor at Simois' leafy shore. 680

'Twas wrath, with purpose pre-ordain'd,
That to unhappy Ilion brought
The dear alliance, dearly bought,
Requiting late the board profaned,
And hearth-protecting Zeus disdain'd ;
Vengeance thus wreaking on the guilty throng,
Bold choristers of Hymeneal song.

But hush'd is now the nuptial lay
The joyous bridemen's glad refrain ;—
And Ilion's towers, with sorrow grey, 690
Have learn'd a new, a doleful strain ;—
Calling on Paris' luckless marriage-bed,
With groans, she weeps her sons to slaughter led.

So once did wight incautious rear
A suckling lion, for the breast
Still yearning, to the house a pest.
Tame in life's early morning, dear 700
To childhood, and by Eld caress'd.
Carried full oft in fondling play,
Like to a babe in arms he lay ;
The hand with winning glances woo'd,
And hunger-stricken, fawn'd for food.

But time the temper doth bewray
 Inherent in his race. Due meed
 Of gentle nurture to repay,
 Rending the flocks with cruel greed,
 Unbidden he prepares the feast, 710
 And mars with gory stain the halls.
 Resistless, dire, athirst for prey,
 The pest the menial train appals,
 Rear'd for the house by Heaven, fell Atë's priest.

So came, fond Ilion to beguile,
 The soul of breathless calm, in evil hour ;—
 The eye's soft arrow, love's soul-piercing flower, 720
 Fair ornament of wealth ;—but, woe the while,
 Swerving aside, ere long she wrought
 To wedlock-hopes a bitter end ;
 To Priam's offspring, mischief-fraught,
 Evil ally, evil friend.
 By hospitable Zeus escorted, lo !
 She sped, dire Fury, bridal Woe.

Lives among men this saw, voiced long ago ;
 " Success consummate breeds apace,
 Nor childless dies, but to the race 730
 From prosperous Fortune springeth cureless Woe."
 Apart I hold my solitary creed.
 Prolific truly is the impious deed ;
 Like to the evil stock, the evil seed ;
 But to the upright house, for aye,
 Endures a noble progeny.

†But ancient outrage, soon or late,
 When strikes the hour ordain'd by Fate, 740
 New outrage breeds, in human ill
 Wild wantoner for aye, until
 In Atè's halls, a second brood,
 Like to the parents, sees the light :
 Frenzy unbridled, unsubdued,
 And Boldness, fierce with godless might.

But Justice doth the smoky cell
 Illumine with celestial sheen,
 And loves with honest worth to dwell ;
 Riches amass'd with hands unclean 750
 Forsaking with averted eyes,
 To holy Innocence she flies ;—
 Wealth she despiseth, falsely stamp'd with praise,
 And to their fated issue all things sways.

[*Enter warriors and captives ; at last AGAMEMNON appears, seated on a chariot with CASSANDRA at his side ; soon after CLYTEMNESTRA, accompanied by female attendants, issues from the palace.*]

Chorus.

Hail, royal lord ! Stormer of Ilion, hail !
 Scion of Atreus ! How so frame my speech
 As neither to o'ershoot the mark, nor fail
 The goal of loving compliment to reach ? 760
 For many men, transgressing right, there be
 Who semblance place above reality.

To him who groans beneath affliction's smart,
 All men have prompt condolence; but the sting
 Of feignèd sorrow touches not the heart.

So men with others' joy rejoicing, bring
 Over their visage an enforcèd smile :

But the discerning shepherd knows his flock,
 And his unerring glance detects their guile,
 Who simulating love, with glozing art
 And watery kindness fawn, but inly mock.

77

But thou, O King, (I speak without disguise,)

In Helen's quarrel busking war's array,
 A mien didst wear unseemly in mine eyes,
 The rudder of thy spirit guiding ill,

In that thou thoughtest courage to instil
 †In men foredoom'd to die, by sacrifice.

But now that thou hast wrought the great emprise,
 Deep-soul'd, nor yet unkind, thy toil I own;—

And, inquest made, in time shall it be known, 780
 Who of thy citizens at home the while
 Guarded thy state with truth, and who with guile.

AGAMEMNON, speaking from the chariot.

First Argos and her tutelary gods,
 Who with me wrought to compass my return,
 And visit Priam's town with vengeance due,
 Justly I hail. For in this cause the gods,
 Sway'd by no hearsay, in the bloody urn
 Without dissentient voice the pebbles cast,
 Sealing the doom of Troy : while Hope alone

Drew near the other urn, by no hand fill'd ; 790
The rising smoke still shows the city's fall.
Still live the storms of Ruin, still uprise
From dying embers the rich fumes of wealth,
Therefore behoves to render to the gods
Memorial thanks ; for we the atrocious rape
Have venged, and in a woman's cause
The Argive monster, offspring of the horse,
Host shield-accoutred, made its deadly leap,
And Priam's city levell'd to the dust,
What time the Pleiades in ocean waned ;
So, bounding o'er the towers, of princely blood 800
The raw-devouring lion lapp'd his fill.
This lengthen'd prelude to the gods ! and now
Weighing the judgment ye erewhile express'd,
I say the same, and am with you agreed,
To few is it congenial, envy free,
To venerate the friend whom Fortune crowns.
The jealous poison, lodged within the heart,
Tortures with twofold pang whom it infects.
By his own griefs oppress'd, the envious man
Groans also to behold another's joy. 810
Out of my proof I speak, for, well I wot,
Who friendship most pretended, only were
Its mirror'd image, shadow of a shade.
None but Ulysses, who unwilling sail'd,
Once harness'd, was my trusty yoke-fellow.
This I affirm, be he alive or dead.
But for the rest, what to the state pertains,
And to the gods, a full assembly call'd,

We'll weigh in free debate. Counsel we need,
 That where the state is sound, we keep it so ; 820
 But where disease the healer's art requires,
 By kind excision, or by cautery,
 We shall attempt to remedy the harm.
 Now to my palace and my household hearth
 Returning, first will I the gods salute,
 Who forward sped me, and who lead me home ;
 May Conquest, who hath follow'd, dwell with me.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Men, citizens, ye elders of our state,
 I blush not in your presence to proclaim
 My wifely tenderness ; for bashful Fear 830
 In time from mortals dies. I will rehearse
 (Not from another's hearsay) the sad life
 'Twas mine to lead while this man was at Troy.
 First, for a woman sever'd from her mate
 To sit forlorn at home, her ear assail'd
 By direful rumours, is a grievous woe.
 One courier comes, another in his train,
 Worse tidings brings to echo through the house ;
 And as for wounds, had my dear lord received
 As many as report kept pouring in, 840
 A net methinks had not been more transpierced.
 But had he died oft as reported, then
 A second triple-bodied Geryon,
 †A threefold cloak of earth he must have donn'd,*

* [Πολλὴν ἄνωθεν, τὴν κάτω γὰρ οὐ λέγω.]

I agree with those critics who reject this line as spurious.

Enduring death in every form he wore.
 Thus harass'd by these ever-rife reports,
 Full often from my neck have forceful hands
 Seized and untied the beam-suspended noose.
 Then too our son stands not beside me now, 850
 The holder of our pledges, mine and thine,
 Orestes, as beseems. Yet marvel not,
 For him thy trusty spear-guest nourisheth,*
 Strophius, the Phocian, who hath me forewarn'd
 Of twofold peril, thine 'neath Ilion's wall,
 And next lest clamour-foster'd Anarchy
 Hazard the plot, as mortals are too prone
 To trample further him already down.
 This pretext, trust me, carries no deceit.
 But for myself the gushing founts of grief 860
 Are all dried up, no single tear is left ;
 Sore with late watching are my weary eyes,
 Weeping the fiery beacons set for thee
 Unkindled ever. In my dreams I saw,
 Crowded in span so brief, thy countless woes ;
 Then, at faint buzzing of the gnat, I woke.
 These sorrows past, now with a heart unwrung
 I hail my husband, watchdog of the fold,
 Sure forestay of the ship ; of lofty roof 870
 Pillar firm based ; Sire's sole-begotten child ;
 Land beyond hope looming to mariners ;
 Day after storm most brilliant to behold ;

* Spear-guest. The Greek word *δορύγευος* is explained by Plutarch, whom Bishop Thirlwall follows, as expressing the relation established when a prisoner of war dismissed on parole has honourably paid his ransom.

To thirsty wayfarer clear gushing spring ;
Sooth, sweet it is to 'scape from harsh constraint ;
With such addresses do I honour him.
Let Envy stand aloof ! for we have borne
Ere this full many a woe. Now dear my lord
Come from thy car ; but on the ground, O King,
Plant not the foot that trampled Iliion. 880
Maidens, why tarry ye, whose duty is
With carpets to bespread his stepping-floor ?
Swift, purple-strew his passage to a home
Unlook'd for, e'en as justice may conduct.
What further she decreeth with the gods,
Thought, not by sleep o'er-master'd, shall dispose.

AGAMEMNON.

Daughter of Leda ! Guardian of my home !
Such as my absence was, is now thy speech,
Drawn out to ample length. With better grace
My praise had come from others than from thee. 890
And for the rest, seek not in woman's fashion
To pamper me, nor in barbaric guise
Gape out loud cries in homage at my feet.
Make not my path, with royal purple strewn,
A mark for envy. To the gods belong
Such signal honours ; but for mortal man,
On rich embroidery to plant his foot,
I own it, is to me not free from dread ;
As mortal honour me, but not as god ;
Without rich carpeting or gorgeous web,

Agamemnon.

37

Glory resoundeth ; an untainted mind
Is Heaven's best gift ; him only call we blest
Who ends in fair prosperity his days.
If thus I bear myself I need not fear.

900

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Against my settled purpose speak not thus.

AGAMEMNON.

Deem not my sober purpose I will mar.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou mightest thus to act have vow'd in fear.

AGAMEMNON.

Final and sure my word as man e'er spake.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Victor, what thinkest thou had Priam done ?

AGAMEMNON.

He verily, I trow, had trod the purple.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Yet fear not thou the censure of the crowd.

910

AGAMEMNON.

Yet hath the people's rumour mighty power.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Life envy-free is life unenviable.

AGAMEMNON.

'Tis not for woman to be fond of strife.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But it becomes the fortunate to yield.

AGAMEMNON.

Dost conquest in this struggle rate so high ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Yield thee ; thy will bend willingly to mine.

AGAMEMNON.

Well, if thou'lt have it so, let one with speed
These buskins loosen, vassals of the foot ;
Lest, if with them sea-tinctured grain I tread,
Some jealous eye of gods smite me from far. 920
For great in sooth the shame, with wanton feet
To mar this wealth of silver-purchased web.
Of this enough. This stranger damsel now
Kindly receive. Zeus, with propitious eye,
Beholds the victor's sway with mercy crown'd,
For willingly none bears the captive yoke ;
But she, choice flow'r of many a goodly spoil,
Fair present from the host, hath follow'd me.
But since herein I yield me to thy will,
Lo ! treading purple to my halls I go. 930

CLYTEMNESTRA.

A sea we have (which who may drain ?) that breeds
Abundant purple, fresh from many a shell,
Precious as silver, brilliant dye of robes,
Whereof, through favour of the gods, these halls
May boast, O King, a store right plentiful ;
For want is stranger to our royal house.
I to such use had many a garment vow'd,

Ransom devising for this precious life,
 Had thus the oracles our house enjoin'd.
 For let the root but live, and leafage spreads,
 To screen the mansion from the dog-star's ray. 940
 So now, returning to thy household hearth,
 As warmth in winter doth thy presence show.
 And when Zeus breweth from the acrid grape
 The luscious wine, reigns coolness in the house,
 If but the husband's presence cheer the home.
 Zeus, Zeus, Fulfiller, now my prayers fulfil:
 What to fulfil thou carest, care for now.

[*Exeunt* CLYTEMNESTRA and AGAMEMNON
into the palace.]

Chorus.

Whence this dread portent, that untired
 Before my bodeful spirit floats? 950
 Wherefore, unbidden and unhired,
 Wake these prophetic notes?
 Why sits not on my bosom's throne
 Courage divinely strong,
 The direful presage to disown
 As riddling dream? Time rolls along,
 And years have passed since Hellas' train,
 Their prows unmooring from the sand,
 Steer'd hence their galleys o'er the main
 For Ilion's distant strand.

After long absence their return 960
 With self-informing eyes I learn,
 Yet from my spirit's depth doth rise

The Fury's lyreless dirge, unsought,
 And hope's sweet boldness dies.
 Not vainly move my inmost reins ;
 Whirleth on eddies of dark thought
 My presage-troubled heart. Hope wanes,
 Yet, false to augury, I pray 970
 Futile may fall my bodeful lay.

No surfeit doth full health confess,
 Yet 'gainst the party-wall doth press
 Its constant neighbour, fell disease.
 Sailing with prosperous course elate,
 Strikes on the reef man's proud estate.
 Reluctant Fear, with well-poised sling, 980
 His bales doth into ocean fling ;
 Riseth once more the bark, and though
 With evil freighted, floats again ;
 Then Heaven's fair gift, the year's increase,
 Whose golden harvests in the furrows grow,
 Of famine quells the pain.

But when on earth the crimson gore
 Of man hath fallen, never more
 May charm or spell the vanish'd life evoke ;
 So he of old, whose mystic lore 990
 From Hades could the dead restore,
 Fell, blasted by the Thunderer's vengeful stroke.
 †Now did not Fate—a heaven-sent Fate—
 Baffle my impulse, ere too late,
 Leaving behind the lagging tongue,
 My heart its bodeful strain had sung.

But now it raves ; no cheering rays
 My anguish'd spirit knows,
 And hopeless to unravel Fate's dark maze 1000
 With fiery ardour glows.

[*Enter CLYTEMNESTRA, stepping hastily out of the palace.*]

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Come thou too in, Cassandra, thee I mean ;
 For not in wrath Zeus placed thee in our house,
 A sharer in our lustral rites to stand,
 With many slaves beside his household altar.
 Now from this car descend ; be not too proud,
 For e'en Alcmena's son,—so runs the tale,
 Sold as a slave, endured the forceful yoke ;
 But if such fate befall thee, great the boon
 Heirs of ancestral wealth to own as lords ; 1010
 For upstarts, beyond hope who fortune reap,
 These reckless are, and cruel to their slaves.
 How we are minded towards thee, thou hast heard.

Chorus.

Thee in clear words she hath address'd, and thou,
 Mesh'd as thou art within the toils of Fate,
 Yield if thou canst ; mayhap thou wilt not yield.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Nay, an she be not, swallow-like, possess'd
 Of an unknown, barbaric tongue, my words,
 Reaching her mind, must move her to comply.

Chorus.

Follow! She counsels for thy need the best : 102²
 Be thou persuaded ;—leave thy chariot-seat.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

No leisure have I here before the gates
 To linger ; for, beside the central hearth,
 The victims wait the sacrificial fire ;
 A favour that our fondest hopes transcends.
 And thou, if thou wilt share our rite, be quick ;—
 But if, poor fool, thou canst not catch my word,
 In place of voice, speak with barbarian hand.

Chorus.

A clear interpreter the stranger needs :
 Savage she seems, like creature newly caught. 1030

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, she is mad ; to her distemper'd thoughts
 She listens ; from a newly-captured town
 She cometh here, nor knows the yoke to bear,
 Till quell'd in foam the passion of her blood.
 But words I'll waste no more, thus to be scorn'd.
[Exit.]

Chorus.

For me, I pity her ; I cannot blame ;
 Come, wretched sufferer, this car forsake ;
 Yield to necessity, hansom the yoke.

Agamemnon.

43

CASSANDRA.

STR. α'.

Ah me! alas! ye gods and earth!

Apollo, O Apollo!

1040

Chorus.

Why raise for Loxias these cries of bale?

Not he the god to need the mourner's wail.

CASSANDRA.

ANT. α'.

Ah me! alas! ye gods and earth!

Apollo! O Apollo!

Chorus.

Once more she calleth with ill-omen'd cry,

The god who hath no part in misery.

CASSANDRA.

STR. β.

Apollo, O Apollo!

Thou way-god! my destroyer!

Once more thou hast destroy'd me utterly.

Chorus.

She seems about to augur her own ills; 1050

Heaven's breathing e'en in bonds her spirit fills.

CASSANDRA.

ANT. β.

Apollo, O Apollo!

Thou way-god! my destroyer!

Ah, whither hast thou led me? to what roof?

Chorus.

To the Atreidan ; an thou dost not know
I tell thee ; thou'lt not say it is not so.

CASSANDRA.

STR. γ.

Ah ! Ah !

In very sooth a heaven-detested house !
Privy to halters, and to kindred gore ;
A human shambles with blood-reeking floor. 1060

Chorus.

Keen-scented seems the stranger, like a hound ;
Ay, and the blood she's tracking will be found.

CASSANDRA.

ANT. γ.

Ah ! Ah !

Trust-worthy vouchers have we here !
These babes, who weep their death-wound, faith inspire,
Their roasted members eaten by their sire !

Chorus.

Thy fame oracular hath reach'd our ear ;
But certes we require no prophet here.

CASSANDRA.

STR. δ.

Ye gods ! what crime is hatching ? What fell blow
Mighty and strange ? Mischief beneath this roof 1070
Is plotted ; all incurable the woe,
To friends unbearable ! Help stands aloof.

Chorus.

Dark are these oracles ; the first I knew ;
For them the city voucheth wholly true.

CASSANDRA.

ANT. 8.

Ah wretch, the deed wilt dare ! with guile '
She in the bath her wedded mate doth cheer ;
How speak the end ? 'Twill soon be here :
Hand after hand is lifted ; woe the while. 1080

Chorus.

I comprehend her not ; this mystic lore,
These blear-eyed oracles perplex me sore.

CASSANDRA.

ST. 6.

Woe ! woe ! Look ! look ! What see I there ?
Is it, ye gods, a net of hell ?
But, lo ! the wife is here the snare,
Co-murderer. Now o'er the loathèd rite
Let the dread brood of night
With rage unglutted the loud chorus swell !

Chorus.

ST. 6.

What Fury 'gainst this house doth summon ? What,
The shriek to raise ? Such utt'rance cheers me not.
Pallid through every vein 1090
Blood to my heart doth run,
Which to the battle slain
Quencheth life's sun ;
But Atè comes amain.

CASSANDRA.

ANT. ε.

Hold! hold! Woe! woe! The heifer there
 Keep from the bull. In meshes fell
 †Of black-woof'd garb entangled,—guileful snare,—
 Catching,—she smites him dead;—
 Prone in his watery bed
 He falls. The lover's guileful doom I tell.

Chorus.

ANT. ς.

I boast not to be skill'd in auguries,
 Yet mischief here I cannot but surmise. 1100
 Through spells to man below
 What grateful cheer is sent?
 Their wordy arts from human woe
 Breed dark presentiment.

CASSANDRA.

ST. ζ.

Woe! woe! my wretched ill-starr'd lot!
 Wailing another's fate mine own I mourn;
 Why hast thou led me hither, all forlorn,
 Unless with thee to perish? Wherefore not?

Chorus.

ST. η.

Thou'rt frenzy-stricken, by a god possess'd,
 And tuneless quirest forth thy doom, 1110
 Like nightingale, with dusky plume
 Sateless of song. From heart oppress'd,
 Ceaseless her Itys, Itys, flows,
 Her life bewailing, rich alone in woes.

Agamemnon.

47

CASSANDRA.

ANT. ζ.

Woe! woe! Shrill nightingale, array'd
In plumèd shape, by hands divine;
Sweet life, unmarr'd by tears, is thine:
But me awaits the double-edgèd blade.

Chorus.

ANT. η.

Whence hast thou these prophetic throes,
Rushing athwart thy soul, in vain? 1120
Why body forth these direful woes,
Chanting aloud thy shrill-voiced strain?
 Whence cometh to thy soul
Of prophecy the dark, ill-omen'd goal?

rite CASSANDRA.

ST. θ.

Oh, nuptial ~~seer~~, *rite* Oh, nuptial rite!
 Of Paris, fraught with doom;
Scamander, whence my fathers drank,
Nourish'd of yore upon thy bank,
 I throve in youthful bloom.
Me now Cocytus and the streams of night 1130
To augur on their dismal shores invite.

Chorus.

ST. ι.

What thought hast utter'd all too clear?
An infant might interpret here.
Smitten within am I with gory sting,
The while thy bird-like cry to hear
 My heart doth wring.

CASSANDRA.

ANT. 8.

Oh, deadly coil ! oh, deadly coil

Of Ilion, doom'd to fall !

Alas the flower-cropping kine

Slain by my father at the shrine

To save her sacred wall !

1140

But cure was none : she perish'd ; vain the toil !

I too, soul-kindled, soon shall press the soil.

Chorus.

ANT. 4.

This tallies with thy former strain ;

Sure some ill demon smites thy brain,

And falling on thee moves thee thus to tell

In piteous chant thy doleful pain.

The end I cannot spell.

CASSANDRA.

In sooth the oracle no more shall peer

Forth from a veil, like newly wedded bride ; 1150

But flashing on the soul, like wind that blows

Sunward, it dasheth 'gainst the orient beams

A mighty surge that doth this grief o'ertop.

No more through dark enigmas will I teach !

And bear me witness, how in eager chase

The track I scent of crimes wrought long ago.

For from this roof departeth never more

A choir, concordant but unmusical,

To evil tuned. Ay, drunk with human blood,

And by the draught made bold, within these halls 1160

Abides a rout, not easy to eject,

Of sister furies ; lodged within these walls
 They chant in chorus the primeval curse.
 Hostile to him his brother's couch who trod,
 In turn they tell their loathing. Have I miss'd ?
 Or, like true archer, have I hit the mark ?
 Or juggler am I, knocking at the door,
 Seeress of falsehood ; witness bear on oath
 That of these halls the hoary crimes I know.

Chorus.

And how can oath be healer of a woe
 Inherent in the race ? Yet marvel I 1170
 That, nurtured o'er the sea, thou canst describe
 A foreign city as though native there.

CASSANDRA.

Loxias, the seer, me with this grace endow'd.

Chorus.

How ! passion-smitten was he, though a god ?

CASSANDRA.

Till now it shamèd me to speak of this.

Chorus.

All in prosperity are over-nice.

CASSANDRA.

Love-wrestler was he, warm his favour breathed.

Chorus.

Came ye in course to rite conjugal ?

CASSANDRA.

To Loxias I gave, but broke, my word.

Chorus.

Already of the prophet's lore possess'd ? 1180

CASSANDRA.

E'en then, I told the citizens their woes.

Chorus.

How then by wrath of Loxias unharm'd ?

CASSANDRA.

No credence won I after this offence.

Chorus.

To us thy oracles seem all too true.

CASSANDRA.

Woe ! woe ! alas ! once more the direful toil
Of faithful augury doth rack my soul,
Smiting with doomful presage ; yonder, look,
See ye these children ? In the courts they sit,
Like dreamy phantoms ;—mark them, forth they star
Holding within their hands their proper flesh,—
Detested banquet, tasted by their sire.
Ay, hence it is that the avenger waits ;
A recreant lion, wallowing in bed,
A stay-at-home, doth plot 'gainst him who comes,
My master (for the yoke I needs must bear).
The naval leader, leveller of Troy,
He knows not that the fell she-dog, whose tongue

Spoke words of guileful welcome, long drawn out,
Like lurking Atè, will achieve his doom. 1200
Such things she dares; the female slays the male!
Her,—what detested monster may I name
And hit the mark? Some basilisk, or Scylla,
Dwelling in cavern'd rocks, to mariners
Fierce ruin? Dam of Hades, breathing forth,
Against her dearest, curse implacable?
What triumph-notes exultantly she raised,
All daring one, as in the turn of fight,
Feigning to gratulate his safe return!
What boots it whether I persuade or no? 1210
The doom'd must come; e'er long to pity moved,
Me thou wilt own a prophetess too true.

Chorus.

Thyestes' banquet of his children's flesh,
I knew and shudder'd at; fear takes my soul
To hear the horror, no mere imagery:—
The rest I heard, but follow not the track.

CASSANDRA.

On Agamemnon dead soon shalt thou look.

Chorus.

Lull, poor forlorn one, thy ill-omen'd tongue.

CASSANDRA.

But there's no Pæon for this prophecy.

Chorus.

If be it must; but may it never be! 1220

CASSANDRA.

The while thou prayest, theirs it is to slay.

Chorus.

What man deviseth this accursèd deed ?

CASSANDRA.

Then much thou errest from mine oracle.

Chorus.

Ay, for the plotter's scheme to me is dark.

CASSANDRA.

And yet the Grecian tongue too well I know.

Chorus.

And Pythian oracles, though hard to spell.

CASSANDRA.

Ah, this prophetic fire ! It seizes me.

Woe ! woe ! Lycéan god ! Apollo ! Woe !

The biped lioness, that with the wolf

In absence of the noble lion couch'd, 1230

Will slaughter me, her victim, and as one

Poison who mixeth, she my doom will add

To crown her vengeance ; whetting 'gainst her lord

The murd'rous knife, she boasteth to exact

His death, as payment for escorting me.

Why longer wear this scorn-provoking gear,

Sceptre, and wreath prophetic round my neck ?

Thee I will shatter ere myself am doom'd.

Hence to destruction I will follow soon ;

Others, instead of me, enrich with woes.

Behold, Apollo's self doth strip me bare 1240
Of the prophetic robe ; coldly he gazed
The while, in consecrated garb array'd,
To friends and foes a laughter I became :
Vagrant yclept, poor hunger-stricken wretch,
Like strolling mountebank, I bare it all ;
And now the seer (his vengeance wreak'd on me
The seeress) calls me to this deadly fate.
My father at the altar fell, but me
The slaughter-block awaits, and reeking knife.
Yet not unhonour'd of the gods we fall ; 1250
For other champion of our cause shall come,
Seed matricidal, venger of his sire.
The exile, from his native land estranged,
Returns, this vengeance for his friends to crown.
For lo, the gods a mighty oath have sworn,
That his slain father's corpse shall lead him home.
But why, an alien here, pour I my wail ?
When that I first have seen my Ilion fare
As fared it hath, and they who won the town
In sorry plight, through judgment of the gods. 1260
I'll go ! I'll do ! I will endure to die.
These gates, as gates of Hades, I adjure,
One prayer I offer, mortal be the stroke ;
Free from convulsive throes, in easy death,
While ebbs my life-blood, may I close mine eyes.

Chorus.

Oh woman, thou, most wretched, and most wise ;
Lengthy thy speech hath been ; but if thou know'st

Truly thine own sad doom, how walkest thou
Like heaven-led victim, boldly to the altar ?

CASSANDRA.

There's no escape ; brief respite, nothing more. 1270

Chorus.

Yet to be last is gain at least of time.

CASSANDRA.

The day is come, small profit were in flight.

Chorus.

Well, patient art thou, and of dauntless mind.

CASSANDRA.

Yet dear to mortals is a glorious death.

Chorus.

By Fortune's minions are such words unheard.

CASSANDRA.

Alas, my sire, for thee and thy brave sons !

[She suddenly starts back.]

Chorus.

What may this mean ? What terror drives thee back ?

CASSANDRA.

Faugh ! faugh !

Chorus.

Why this disgust, unless some horror scare thee ?

CASSANDRA.

Blood-reeking murder breatheth from these halls. 1280

Chorus.

How so ? 'Tis but the sacrificial scent.

CASSANDRA.

'Tis such a breath as issues from the tomb.

Chorus.

No Syrian perfume for the house thou boastest.

CASSANDRA.

Well ! I will go, within these palace halls
To wail mine own and Agamemnon's doom.
Enough of life ! Strangers ! Alas ! Alas !
Yet quail I not, as birdè at the brake,
With idle dread ; in this my vouchers be
When, in my place, woman for woman dies,
And when for man ill-wedded, man shall fall. 1290
Dying, this hospitable grace I crave.

Chorus. •

Poor wretch ! Thy fateful doom my pity moves.

CASSANDRA.

Once more I fain would speak, but not to pour
Mine own sad dirge ; thee, Holy Sun, I call,
Looking my last upon thy beams, I pray
That my avengers pay my murd'ers back,
Requiting me, poor slave, their easy prey.
Alas, for man's estate ! If Fortune smile,
A shadow may o'erturn it ; should she frown,
A moisten'd sponge the picture doth destroy. 1300
More than the first this doom my pity moves.

[*Exit into the palace.*]

*Agamemnon.**Chorus.*

With boundless greed elate
 Men clutch the gifts of Fate!
 Where Envy pointeth, no one bars the door,
 And cries, "Approach no more."

So to our king the gods have given
 To capture Troy;—Beloved of Heaven
 Home he returns;—but must he now
 Atone for blood shed long ago,
 And, death with death requiting, bow
 To appease the shades below,— 1310
 What mortal these things hearing prayeth not
 That he were born to scathless lot?

AGAMEMNON.

[*In the palace.*]

Woe's me! I'm smitten with a deadly blow.

Chorus.

I. Hush! Wounded unto death who lifts this cry?

AGAMEMNON.

Woe's me! Again! a second time I'm struck.

Chorus. (In excitement and dismay.)

II. By the groaning of the monarch
 Wrought methinks is now the deed.

III. But together taking counsel,
 Weave we now some prudent scheme.

- IV. I advise to call the townsfolk
Hither to the house for help. 1320
- V. Rather let us enter quickly,—
By the newly dripping weapon
To bring home this shameless deed.
- VI. I, assenting, vote for action,
For the time brooks no delay.
- VII. That is certain, for these preludes
Threaten bondage to the State.
- VIII. Ay ! we linger ;—thoughts of dalliance
Underneath their feet they trample,
Neither sleep they at their task.
- IX. What to counsel here I know not ;—
'Gainst the guilty we must plot. 1330
- X. So deem I, since words are futile,
To restore the dead to life.
- XI. Shall we life endure 'neath rulers
Who these halls have fill'd with shame ?
- XII. Past endurance ! Milder doom were
Death than bear the tyrant's yoke.
- XIII. From these outcries may we augur
Surely that the man is dead ?
- XIV. We must know ere we can argue ;
Knowledge differs from surmise. 1340
- XV. I too vote that we discover
Plainly how Atrides fares.

[*The doors of the royal palace are thrown open ; CLYTEMNESTRA is discovered standing with the axe over her shoulder. Behind her, under a cover, are the bodies of AGAMEMNON and CASSANDRA.*]

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Though much to suit the times before was said,
 It shames me not the opposite to speak ;
 For, plotting against foes,—our seeming friends,—
 How else contrive with Ruin's wily snare,
 Too high to overleap, to fence them round ?
 Now unto me hath come, not unforeseen,
 Though late, the crisis of an ancient feud.
 The deed achieved, here stand I, where I slew. 1350
 So was it wrought (and this I'll not deny),
 That he could neither 'scape, nor ward his doom ;
 A cunning net, mesh'd tightly, as for fish,
 The garment's deadly splendour, round I cast,—
 Him twice I smote,—twice groaning prone he fell,
 With limbs relax'd ;—then, prostrate where he lay,
 Him with third blow I dower'd, votive gift
 To Hades, guardian of the dead below.
 Thus as he fell he chafed his soul away ;
 And from the wound, while deadly murder throbs, 1360
 With black and gory dew he smiteth me,
 Not less exultant than, in Heaven-sent joy
 The corn-sown land, in birth-hour of the germ.
 For this great issue, Argive Senators,
 Joy ye, if joy ye can, but I exult.
 Nay, o'er the slain were off'rings meet ;—with right
 Here were they pour'd ;—with emphasis of right.

He, who once crown'd the bowl of household ills
With curses, drains it now on his return.

Chorus.

We marvel at thy tongue, how bold thy speech 1370
Who makest so thy vaunt, woman o'er man.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

As witless woman are ye proving me ;
But I with steadfast heart, to you who know,
Proclaim,—and whether ye will praise or blame,
It recks me not,—this man is Agamemnon,—
My husband, but a corpse, of this right hand
The righteous handiwork ;—so stands the case.

Chorus.

What mischief, O woman, what earth-nurtured bane
Hast tasted, what draught from the sea's briny deep, 1380
That curses, folk-mutter'd, of loathing and hate,
Like incense of death on thy head thou dost heap ?
Sheer hast thou smitten, and sheer hast thou slain,
So outlaw'd be thou from the State !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Me thou dost doom to exile,—to endure
The people's hate, their curse deep-mutter'd,—thou,
Who 'gainst this man of yore hadst naught to urge.
He, all unmoved, as though brute life he quench'd,
The while his fleecy pastures teem'd with flocks,
His own child slaughter'd ;—charm for Thracian blasts ; 1390

Of all my travail throes to me most dear.
 Him shouldst thou not have chased from land and home,
 Just guerdon for foul deed? Stern judge thou art
 When me thou dost arraign;—but, mark my words,
 (Nerved as I am to threat on equal terms,)
 If with strong hand ye conquer me, then rule;—
 But if high Heaven decree the opposite,
 Though late, shall ye, to sober sense, be school'd.

Chorus.

Oh haughty of spirit, as raveth thy mind
 'Neath blood-reeking Fortune,—thy boasting is high;— 14
 The while on thy forehead glares forth to the sight,
 The red cloth of blood that for vengeance doth cry;—
 Reft of thy friends thou hereafter shalt find
 That death-blow shall death-blow requite.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Now hearken ye to this my solemn oath;—
 By the accomplish'd vengeance of my child,
 By Atè, by Erinnyes, unto whom
 I slew this man,—Expectancy for me
 Treads not the halls of Fear, while on my hearth, 1410
 Ægisthus, kind as heretofore, burns fire;—
 For he of boldness is no puny shield.
 There lies the outrager of me, his wife,
 Minion to each Chryseis under Troy,
 Here too his captive, dream-interpreter,
 His prophetess, and faithful concubine,
 At sea who shared with him the sailor's bench.

Not unrequited have they wrought, for lo,
Prone lieth he, and she, his paramour,
Having in swanlike fashion breathed her last, 1420
Her dying wail, lies there, and by her death
With keener relish crowns my nuptial bliss.

Chorus.

Oh might some sudden Fate
Not tether'd to a weight
Of couch-enchaining anguish, hither waft
The boon of endless sleep!
For our dear king we weep,—
In woman's cause of yore,
Full many a pang who bore,
And now lies smitten by a woman's craft.

Woe! frenzied Helen, woe! 1430
Through thee alone, through one,
What numbers were undone,
What havoc dire 'neath Ilion thou hast wrought.
And now blood's heirloom, Strife,
With husband-murder rife,
Through thee to full perfection hath been brought.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Bow'd beneath sorrow's weight,
Invoke not deadly Fate,
Nor in thine anger Helen thus arraign, 1440
As though through her, through one,
Fell many a Danaan son;—
She-man-destroyer, working cureless bane!

Chorus.

Demon, who now dost fall
 Ruthless on Atreus' hall
 Making the twin Tantalidæ thy prey,
 †Through woman's frenzied breast,
 By thy dread might possessed
 Gnawing my heart, thou dost confirm thy sway.
 Like bodeful raven hoarse,
 She standeth o'er the corse,
 And chants exulting her discordant lay. 1450

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay now thy speech in sooth
 Runs even with the truth,
 Calling the thrice-dread demon of this race;
 For in their veins is nursed,
 By him, the quenchless thirst
 For blood; ere pales the trace
 Of ancient gore, new murder flows apace.

Chorus.

Mighty the demon, dire his hate,
 Whom here thou boastest to preside;
 Alas! ill-omen'd praise of Fate, 1460
 Baneful and still unsatisfied!
 Alas! 'Tis Zeus, in will, in deed,
 Sole cause, sole fashioner; for say
 What comes to mortals undecreed
 By Zeus, what here, that owneth not his sway?
 Woe! woe!

**My king! my king! how weep thy death?
How voice my heart-felt grief? Thou liest there
Entangled in the spider's guileful snare;
In impious toils, thou gaspest forth thy breath. 1470**

Woe! woe! To death betray'd,
Sped by the two-edged blade,
On servile couch now ignominious laid.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Dost boast as mine this deed?
Then wrongly thou dost read,
†**To count me Agamemnon's wife;—for know,**
Appearing in the mien
Of this dead monarch's queen,
The old Atridan Fury dealt the blow;—
Venging the horrid feast, 1480
For the slain babes, as priest,
The full-grown victim now he layeth low.

Chorus.

That thou art guiltless of this blood
Who will attest? Yet by thy side,
Haply, as thy accomplice, stood
The Fury who doth here preside.
Through streams of kindred gore
Presseth grim Arcs on to claim
Requital for the deed of shame;—
The clotted blood of babes devour'd of yore. 1490

Woe! Woe!

My king! my king! how weep thy death?
How voice my heartfelt grief? Thou liest there
Entangled in the spider's guileful snare,
In impious toils thou gaspest forth thy breath.

Woe! woe! to death betray'd,
Sped by the two-edg'd blade,
On servile couch now ignominious laid.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

By no unjust decree
Perish'd this man, for he 1500
Murder most foul and strange enacted here:—
His proper child he slew,
Sweet bud from me that grew,
Iphigenia, wept with many a tear.
Foul quittance for foul deed;—
He reap'd the sword's due meed,
Hence no proud boast from him let Hades hear!

Chorus.

Perplex'd I am, bewilder'd sore,
Totters the house, escape is vain; 1510
I dread the plashing of the crimson rain
That shakes these walls;—it drips no more;—
Falleth in gushing shower the gore.
And bent on mischief, Fate anew
On other whetstones, whetteth vengeance due.

Earth! Earth! oh hadst thou been
My shroud ere I had seen
Him in the silver-sided laver prone!
Who will inter him? Who the cry intone?
So hardy thou? Wilt thou who didst assail 1520
Thy husband's life, thyself uplift the wail,
With graceless grace thy outrage to atone?
Who will pronounce, weeping with honest grief,
The funeral praises of the god-like chief?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not thine the task to counsel here.
By us he fell: this man we slow;
Ours be it to inurn him too. 1530
Borne from the palace, o'er the bier
Shall sound no notes of wailing;—no,
But by Cocytus' rapid flow
Iphigenia him shall meet;
His daughter, as beseemeth, arms shall throw
Around her father, and with kisses greet.

Chorus.

Taunt answers taunt; a riddle hard to read:—
Spoil'd be the spoiler; 'who sheds blood must bleed.
While Zeus surviveth shall this law survive. 1540
Doer must suffer; 'tis the Fates' decree;
Who from the house the fated curse may drive?
The race is welded to calamity.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay! now on Truth thou dost alight!
 I with the demon of this race—
 The Pleisthenid—an oath will plight.
 My doom, though grievous, I embrace.
 But for the rest, hence let him haste!
 Another mansion let him waste 1550
 By kindred murder. For myself,
 When from these halls blood-frenzy I have chased,
 Small pittance shall I crave of worldly pelf.

[Enter ÆGISTHUS, arrayed in royal robes, and with armed attendants.]

ÆGISTHUS.

Hail, joyous light of justice-bearing day!
 That the Olympian gods, judges of men,
 Mark earthly guilt now well may I aver,
 Seeing this man (to me a welcome sight)
 Prone in the Furies' death-robe;—paid the debt
 Of deeds, devised, and compass'd by his sire. 1560
 For Atreus, Argos' ruler, this man's father,
 Did from the city and his home expel
 Thyestes, rival in the sovereignty,—
 My father, to be plain, and his own brother.
 Returning to his home, as suppliant,
 Wretched Thyestes found a lot secure,
 Not doom'd his natal soil with blood to stain,
 But Atreus, godless father to this man,
 Feigning, with zeal officious more than kind,
 With festive rites to welcome back my sire, 1570

A banquet of his children's flesh prepared ;
Their feet he serves,—the members of their hands,—
Disguised indeed,—sitting himself aloof.
Thyestes, all unconscious, eats the food
Curse-laden, as thou seest, to the race.
Discerning then the impious deed, he shriek'd,
And back recoiling the foul slaughter spew'd.
Spurning, with righteous curse, th' insulted board,
Dread doom he vows to the Pelopidæ ;—
“ So perish the whole race of Pleisthenes.” 1580
Hence is it that ye see this man laid low,
And me, the righteous planner of his death,
For me, the thirteenth child, in swathing clothes,
He with my wretched sire, to exile drove.
But, grown to manhood, Justice led me home,
And I, although aloof, have reach'd this man,
The threads combining of the fatal plot.
Now for myself 'twere glorious to die,
Him having seen entrapp'd in Justice' toils.

Chorus.

To honour insolence in guilt, Ægisthus, 1590
I know not ;—that with purpose thou didst kill
This man, thou boastest ; of his piteous doom
Sole author thou :—I tell thee thine own head
To justice brought, be sure shall not escape
The curse of stoning by the people's hand.

ÆGISTHUS.

Plying the lowest oar, dost menace us

Who from the upper benches sway the helm?
 Soon shalt thou know how bitter at thy years
 Wisdom by stern necessity to learn.
 But bonds and hunger-pangs, to cure the mind
 Of stubborn eld, are skilful leeches found. 1
 Dost see these things, yet canst thou not perceive?
 Against the pricks kick not;—'tis dangerous!

Chorus.

Woman, house-mate to him from recent war
 Return'd,—defiler of thy husband's bed,
 Death didst thou plot against this warrior chief?

ÆGISTHUS.

These words will fountains be of bitter tears.
 Thy tongue the opposite to Orpheus is;
 For he drew all by rapture of his voice,
 While thou, by idle bark, dost all things stir
 †To hate;—when conquer'd, thou wilt tamer show. 161

Chorus.

Shalt thou be ruler of the Argives, thou,
 Who, when that thou hadst plotted this man's death,
 Didst courage lack to strike the blow thyself?

ÆGISTHUS.

To spread the snare was plainly woman's part,
 For I, his ancient foeman, was suspect;
 But arm'd with this man's treasure, be it mine
 To rule his citizens. Th' unruly colt

That, barley-fed, turns restive, I will bind
 † **With** heavier thong than yokes the trace-horse ;—him,
Darkness' grim comrade, Famine, soon shall tame. 1620

Chorus.

Why didst thou not, base-hearted, slay this man
Thyself ? But now his wife has slaughter'd him,
The land polluting and her country's gods.
Orestes, haply sees he still the light,
That, home-returning through auspicious Fate,
He may, with mighty stroke, deal death to both ?

ÆGISTHUS.

Since such thy thoughts and words, thou soon shalt
 know—

[*To his attendants.*

Come on ! my guards, not distant is the fray.

Chorus.

Come on ! Let each make ready, hand on hilt.

ÆGISTHUS.

I too refuse not, hand on hilt, to die. 1630

Chorus.

That word, as omen of thy death, we hail.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Let us not, best beloved, work further bale !
A wretched crop we, in these ills, have reap'd.
Let bygone woe suffice !—no bloodshed more.
Repair, old men, to your allotted homes,
Ere that your deeds breed mischief.—We've but wrought

As Fate enjoin'd. If trouble is man's lot
 We have enough encounter'd ; smitten down
 By the fell demon's anger ;—thus ye have
 A woman's rede, if that ye deign to learn.

ÆGISTHUS.

That their vain tongue should blossom into speech
 And hurl such words at me ! They tempt their do
 Sinning 'gainst prudence, to insult the strong.

Chorus.

We Argive men fawn not upon the base.

ÆGISTHUS.

Some future day I shall o'ertake thee yet.

Chorus.

Not if some god should lead Orestes home.

ÆGISTHUS.

Exiles, I know, are wont to feed on hopes.

Chorus.

Work ! gorge thy fill ! stain justice ! thine the power.

ÆGISTHUS.

Know for this folly thou shalt pay me dear.

Chorus.

Boast, glorying like cock beside his dame.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Heed not their idle barking ;—thou and I,
 Ruling the palace, fitly will ordain.

NOTES TO THE AGAMEMNON.

[MY friend the translator wishing to obviate the charge of arbitrarily deviating from Æschylus, requests me to draw up a list of the conjectural emendations of the text which I have suggested. Space forbids my here justifying them. I will state them as briefly as I can. F. W. N.]

AGAMEMNON.

VERSE 7. Omit *ἀστέρας* as an interpretation of *δυνάστας*, and read *ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολὰς τε τῶνδ', ὀρώ*.

10, 11. Read *ἐλπίζει* for *ἐλπίζω*, and retain the infinitive *κρατεῖν*. Then *κέρ* is nominative, and *ᾧδε κρατεῖν* refers to the capture of Troy, "get such mastery."

138. For *τόσσον περ εὐφρων καλὰ . . .* read—
‡πᾶσιν ‡ γὰρ εὐφρων [Ἄρτεμὶς ἐστί] καλὰ
δρόσοισι λεπτοῖσιν ‡ μαλακῶν τε ‡ λαγῶν . . .

142. *τερπνὰ [δὲ δαίμονα θέσπιν ὁ μάντις]*
τούτων αἰτεῖ σύμβολα κρᾶναι,
δεξιὰ μὲν κατὰ μομφὰ δὲ φάσματα ‡ κρίνων.
"Ἰήϊον ‡ αὖ καλέω

146. *Παιᾶνα [θεῖον], μήτινας ἀντιπνόους*
Δαναοῖς χρονίας ἐχενῆδας
‡ Ἄγρεια τεύξη, σπενδομένα θυσίαν
ἑτέραν

In 142, 146 such words as I insert seem to be deficient.

In 144 I have written *κρίνων* for the absurd *στρούθων*.

In 148 a nominative, expressive of Artemis, is deficient. I have changed *ἀπλοίας*, which can hardly bear the epithet *ἐντιπνόους*, into *Ἄγρεια* (huntress).

164. Read *εὔξεται* for the old *λέξει*. *Οὐδὲν εὔξεται πρὶν ὦν* "will not vaunt that he was aught of yore."

175. For *δέ που* read *γέ που*, and remove the stop after *σωφρονεῖν*. Join *ἄκοντας* with *σωφρονεῖν*, *ἦλθε* with *βιαιῶς*. "And to men, loath to learn sobriety, there cometh forcibly a grace (I trow) of deities, who sit on holy bench." The "grace" is the painful wisdom learned by suffering.

226. For *προνωπῇ* read *προνωπεῖς*.

233. After *γραφαῖς* insert [*ποικίλαις*]. In the antistrophe do not omit *προκλύειν*, but for *ἐπει* read *πῇ*, and omit *ἡ* before *λύσις*. *Τὸ μέλλον δὲ προκλύειν, πῇ γένοιτ' ἂν λύσις, προχαίρετω*.

278. For *ἰσχὺς* read *ῥσχας* or *ῥσχους*, "*twigs*" of flame; suggested by *πεύκη*, the pine. In the corrupt *πρὸς ἡδονήν* a verb is concealed, such as *προήχμασεν*, *προήκρισεν*, vibrated, perked forward. *Προσήλασεν* is possible, but was less likely to be corrupted than some rarer verb.

299. Before *φλέγουσαν* a whole line seems to be lost, such as [*αἶγην κελεύουσ', ἀστραπαῖς εὐαγγέλοις*] *φλέγουσαν*.

327. For *ὥς δυσδαίμονες* Blomfield well gave *ὥς δ' εὐδαίμονες*.

365. Treading in Blomfield's steps, I attempt the corrupt passage thus—

*πέφανται δ' † ἐγγενῆς
ἀτολμήτως Ἄρη
πνεόντων, μείζον ἢ δικαίως.
φλεόντων δωμάτων ὑπερφεῦ,
† τόδ' οὔτε βέλτιστόν † ἐστ'
οὔτ' ἀπήμαντον*

(Τόδε, the fact of excessive abundance.)

412. For *πάρεστι σιγὰς ἄτιμος ἀλοίδορος*
ἄδιστος ἀφεμένων ἰδεῖν :

read—

*πάρεστι σιγὰ κατ' οἴμους, ἀλοίδορος,
τᾷστ' ἀφωμένων ἰδεῖν.*

Join *σιγὰ ἀφωμένων*. "There is silence along (her) paths,

while they grope to see things that cannot be seen." I understand ἀφωμένων of Helen's ὁμηλική, her maids of honour. In antistrophe for Ἑλλάδος read Ἑλλάνος.

541. For οὐ λαχόντες, which is nonsense, read ὀλούζοντες, or οἰμώζοντες.

741. This very corrupt passage admits of an approximate solution, thus—

ἔβριν, τότ' ἢ τόθ', ὅτε τὸ κύριον μὸλη,
‡ νεαροῖς ‡ φανοῦσαν ‡ τόκοισι
δαίμονα ‡ παντομάχαν
ἀνίερον θράσος μελαι-
νας μελάβροισιν Ἄτας,
εἰδομένην τοκεῦσιν.

Vulgo, † νεὰ † φαόνος κότον | δαίμονά † τε † τὸν ἄμαχον ἀπό-
λεμον | ἀνίερον Θράσος Ἄτης is put for θράσεια Ἄτη,
and εἰδομένη, *fem.*, agrees with it. If μελαίνας is correct, it
seems to mean "gloomy (funereal)," and is joined with the
dative μελάβροις. Then the antistrophe is (omitting βίον in
749, and reading ἔδεθλα with Dindorf, &c.)—

τὰ χρυσόπαστα δ' ἔδεθλα σὺν πίνῳ χερῶν
παλιντρόποις ὄμμασιν λιποῦσ', Ὀσίαν προσέβα, ...

(for *vulg.*, ὄσια).

776. Adopting from Franke ἐκ θυσιῶν for ἐκούσιον, read also θρήσκοισι for θνήσκουσι, which cannot be right. Then we get

θράσος ἐκ θυσιῶν
ἄνδρασι θρήσκοισι κομίζων.

"infusing into religious men confidence from the sacrifices."

844. Πολλήν . . . λέγω. Schutz, if I remember, regards the line as spurious, and with good reason. Πολλήν ἄνωθεν has come from πολλὰς ἄνωθεν just above; and he imagines a commentator to have expounded the second Geryon to be Agamemnon: τὸν κάτω γὰρ οὐ λέγει; "for he does not mean the Geryon below."

994.—For μοῖρα μοῖραν, which is nonsense, read μοῖρ' ἄμοιρά μ'; and compare νᾶες ἄναες, γάμος ἄγαμος.

1095. For μελαγκέρων, by all means read μελαγκρόκῳ, and for ἐν πέπλοισι perhaps ἐμπλακέντα.

1443. For πολύμναστον read (*metri causâ*) πολυύμναστον, and after the word mark a hiatus of five lines. The antistrophe to πολυύμναστον is τίς ὁ θρηνήσων.

1446. For κράτος ισόψυχον (which is defective in metre, as well as sense) read κράτος σινόψυχον, "thou establishest a soul-blighting sway by means of women." Hermann by inserting τ' after κράτος did not improve the sense.

1476. Read, for the sense, εἶναι μ' ἄλοχον [τοῦδ' ὀλέειραν], also 1480, . . . τόνδ' ἀπέτισεν [φονίαισι δίκαις]. In antistrophe omit Ἰφιγένειαν as a gloss, and read

τὴν πολύκλαυτον ἀνάξια δράσας,

then strophe and antistrophe become commensurate.

Perhaps in 1497 δολίφ should be δουλίφ, and in 1501 δολίαν should be δούλιον, which the argument from ἀνελείθερον seems to demand. (Indeed the metre of δολίφ in 1497 is not satisfactory.) Yet the argument of οὐδὲ γὰρ in 1501 remains obscure or strained.

1610. For ἄξει read ἔχθει, in contrast to χαρᾶ.

1618. For σειραφόρον read σειραφόρων: "bands heavier than common harness."

CHOEPHORI.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ORESTES.
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE WOMEN.
ELECTRA.
CLYTEMNESTRA.
ÆGISTHUS.
PYLADES.
NURSE.
ATTENDANT.

[SCENE.—*The royal palace in ARGOS, as in the previous tragedy.*
The tomb of AGAMEMNON is seen in the orchestra. ORESTES
and PYLADES enter in the garb of travellers. They approach
the tomb. ORESTES ascends the steps.]

CHOEPHORI.

—◆—
ORESTES.

THEE, shade-escorting Hermes, I invoke,
In Hades guardian of my royal sire,—
To me, thy suppliant, be saviour thou,
My firm ally,—for to this land I come
Exile no more;—on this sepulchral mound
Father I call thee,—hearken to my cry!—

* * * * *

A primal lock, as nurture-gift, I vow'd
To Inachus, and now this second lock,
Grief's token, Father, I devote to thee,—
For, absent from thy funeral obsequies,
I could not then as mourner weep thy death,
Nor speed with outstretch'd hand thy royal bier.

[*The Chorus arrayed in mourning costume come forth from the palace. ELECTRA closes the procession.*]

But who are these? What means this female train 10
Conspicuous, in the sable garb of woe?

What may their doleful ministry import?
 Doth some new sorrow fall upon our house?
 Or do I deem aright that to my sire
 They bear libations,—soothings for the dead?
 It must be so, for lo, methinks I see,
 Steering this way, Electra, my dear sister,
 Signal by depth of woe. Oh, grant me, Zeus,
 To venge my father's death;—be thou to me
 Ally propitious!—Now, my Pylades,
 Stand we apart, that I may clearly learn
 What may import this suppliant female train.

[They conceal themselves.]

[While the Chorus encircle the tomb they sing the following Ode:—]

Chorus.

Sent from the palace, forth I tread, 20
 With hands shrill-clapp'd, a doleful train,—
 Libations bearing to the dead.
 Marr'd is my cheek with many a stain,
 Nail-plough'd the furrows bleed,
 The while on cries of pain
 My heart doth feed.
 Rending my flaxen-tissued vest,
 With smileless passion, uncontroll'd,
 Grief doth my sorrow-stricken breast,
 Dismantle of the garment's decent fold

For shrill, hair-bristling Fear,
 Of Atreus' home dream-prompting seer, 30

Breathing forth rage in sleep,—at dead of night
From the recesses of these royal halls,
Rang out a cry of wild affright
That heavy on the women's chambers falls.
And dream-interpreters, in Heaven's high name
To faithful utt'rance pledg'd, proclaim
That unavenged 'neath earth, the slain
Against their slayers wrathfully complain.

Against the threaten'd ill
Devising cure (oh, fostering earth),
The godless woman sends me to fulfil
Kindness unkindly, nothing worth.
To speak the words prescribed I dread ;— 40
For how atone for blood once shed ?
Ah ruin'd house ! Ah wretched hearth !
Horror's ill-omen'd, sunless cloud
Doth through the master's fall the dwelling shroud.

The majesty of yore whom all obey'd
Invincible, supreme,—who fill'd the ear
Of faithful lieges, and their hearts who sway'd,
Standeth aloof ;—Fear reigneth now,
For to Prosperity men bow, 50
Which they as God, ay more than God, revere.
But Justice' stroke some swift doth whelm
In light who dwell elate ;—
While woes from Darkness' glimmering realm,
†Lingering on others wait ;—
Others sheer Night enshrouds in blackest fate.

When nurturing earth is blood-drench'd, lo
 Fix'd is for aye the vengeance-crying gore ;—
 And he who shed it, paying Atè's score,
 †Doth burgeon out in all-entangling woe. 60
 The bridal couch if man profane,
 †Hopeless is cure ; though rivers rush amain,
 Together surging in a mighty flood,
 To purify the hand defiled by blood,
 They purify in vain.

But for myself, through Heaven's command,
 The captured city's doom I share ;—
 Led hither from my native land,
 'Tis mine the menial's lot to bear.
 Their acts, whose will my fortune sways,
 Just or unjust, I needs must praise : 70
 †Beneath my vest grief's anguish'd throes
 Shrouding, I quell my bitter hate ;—
 While numb'd in heart by secret woes,
 Of my true lords I weep the hapless fate.

ELECTRA.

Ye captive women, ye who tend this home,
 Since ye are present to escort with me
 These lustral rites, your counsel now I crave.
 How, while I pour these off'rings on the tomb
 Speak words well-omen'd, how invoke my Sire ? 80
 Shall I declare that from a loving wife
 To her dear lord I bear them ? from my mother ?
 My courage fails, nor know I what to speak,

Pouring libations on my father's tomb.
Or shall I pray, as holy wont enjoins,
That to the senders of these chaplets, he
Requital may accord, ay! meed of ill.
Or, with no mark of honour, silently,
For so my father perish'd, shall I pour
These vain oblations to the thirsty earth,
Then, tossing o'er my head the lustral urn,
(As one who loathèd refuse forth has cast,) 90
With eyes averted, back retrace my steps?
Be ye partakers in my counsel, friends,
For in this house one common hate we share.
Through fear hide not the feelings of your heart;
For Destiny awaits alike the free
And him o'ermaster'd by a tyrant's hand;—
If ye have aught more wise to urge, say on.

Chorus.

Thy father's tomb revering as an altar,
Since thou commandest, I will speak my thoughts.

ELECTRA.

As thou my father's tomb reverest, speak. 100

Chorus.

Pour, and high claims uplift for righteous hearts.

ELECTRA.

Among his friends whom thus may I address?

Chorus.

First name thyself and whoso hates Ægisthus.

ELECTRA.

Then for myself and thee I pour this prayer.

Chorus.

Hearing my words, do thou interpret them.

ELECTRA.

Whom else to number with this friendly band?

Chorus.

Think of Orestes though an exile still,

ELECTRA.

'Tis well,—not vainly hast thou prompted me.

Chorus.

Now for the guilty,—mindful of his death,—

ELECTRA.

What shall I say? unskill'd, instruct me thou. 110

Chorus.

Pray that to them may come or god, or mortal,—

ELECTRA.

As judge or as avenger meanest thou?

Chorus.

Say simply, who shall death with death requite.

ELECTRA.

May I the gods thus pray nor impious be?

Chorus.

How not requite an enemy with ill?

ELECTRA.

Of powers above the earth and powers below
Herald supreme, escorter of the shades,
Hermes, now summon to attend my prayer,
The guardians of my father's house, dread powers,
Throned in the nether world, and mother Earth, 120
Who all things bringeth forth, who fosters all,
And doth of all receive again the germ.
And I, libations pouring to the dead,
Thus pray, my Sire invoking;—pity me,
And dear Orestes pity;—now restore
The loved one to his home! For sold, alas,
By her who bare us, we as outcasts live,
While, for Ægisthus, 'complice in thy death,
Her lord she barter'd;—slavish is my lot,
Orestes exiled from his wealth, the while
Revel the twain, exulting in thy fall. 130
That home, Orestes, may at length return,
By glad success escorted, I implore;
Give ear, my father, and vouchsafe to me
A spirit than my mother's chaster far,
And hands more pure. For us these orisons;
But for thy foes, may thine avenger come,
And those be justly slain who slaughter'd thee!
Thus intermingled with my pious prayers,
For them an evil utterance I pour.
To us send blessings, Father, with the gods, 140

With mother Earth, and Justice, conquest-crown'd ;
 Over such prayers, libations, lo ! I pour.
 Yours be it now, lifting the solemn wail,
 To crown with dole the pæan of the dead.

[*While the Chorus sings the following Ode, ELECTRA ascends
 the steps of the tomb, and pours the libation.*]

Chorus.

† Drop ye for the dead
 Tears with pattering sound ;
 Lustral rain is shed
 Over the hallow'd mound,
 From the pure which screeneth bale,
 While the powers of Evil quail.
 Hear oh ! master, at thy tomb, 150
 Whisper'd sounds from sorrow's murky gloom.

Now in measured flow
 Tune the notes of woe !
 When will warrior brave,
 † An Ares, strong to save
 Houses in the dust laid low,
 Hurl the spear, from hornèd bow
 Wing the arrow's deadly flight,
 Or wield the hilted brand in serried fight ?

ELECTRA.

These earth-drain'd offerings hath my sire received.

[*She perceives the lock of hair laid by ORESTES.*]

Ha ! this new argument now ponder ye.

Chorus.

What meanest thou ? Boundeth my heart with fear !

ELECTRA.

Laid on the tomb this lock of hair I see. 160

Chorus.

Shorn from what man, or what deep-girdled maid ?

ELECTRA.

Who here will guess may easily divine.

Chorus.

Although the elder, I from thee would learn.

ELECTRA.

There is but one who could have shorn this hair.

Chorus.

True, foes are they who with the lock should mourn.

ELECTRA.

And certes, it is very like in hue.

Chorus.

Like to what tresses ? That I fain would learn.

ELECTRA.

In sooth it hath the colour of mine own.

Chorus.

Then should it be Orestes' stealthy gift ?

ELECTRA.

The semblance of his clust'ring locks it bears. 170

Chorus.

But hither how could he have dared to come ?

ELECTRA.

This lock he sent, an offering to his sire.

Chorus.

Not less bewept by me what now thou sayest,
If, living, he may never tread this land.

ELECTRA.

Rolls o'er my heart a surge of bitterness,
Smitten am I as with a piercing shaft ;
And from these eyes, while gazing on this lock,
The thirsty drops of sorrow's wintry flood
Flow unrestrain'd. For how may I conceive
That other of the townsmen owns this hair ? 180
And certes, she who slew him shear'd it not,
My mother,—all unworthy of the name,
Who towards her children bears a godless mind.
Though not with full assurance may I call
This offering his, dearest of mortal men,
Orestes,—still, hope fawns upon my heart.
Alas !—
Oh had it, herald-like, a friendly voice,
That I by doubt no more might be distraught.
Then had it clearly counsell'd me this lock

Choephor.

87

To loathe, if sever'd from a foeman's head, 190
Or else akin to me had shared my grief,
Gracing this tomb, an honour to my sire.

Chorus.

But let us call upon the gods, who know
In what dire storms, like sailors, we are whirl'd ;
Since if by them our safety is ordain'd,
From tiny seed may spring a mighty stock.

[*ELECTRA, descending the steps of the tomb.*]

ELECTRA.

And lo, these traces—yet another sign ;
Footprints that tally with my own ;—and see,
Two diverse outlines are impress'd, his own,
And also of some fellow-wayfarer. 200
The impress of this foot, from heel to toe,
Thus measured, hath the symmetry of mine.
Travails my heart—disorder'd is my wit.

[*ORESTES approaching her.*]

ORESTES.

Acknowledging to Heaven thy prayers fulfill'd,
Pray that the further issue may be blest.

ELECTRA.

What have I won by favour of the gods ?

ORESTES.

Him to behold for whom thou long hast pray'd.

ELECTRA.

How knowest thou for whom I raised the prayer?

ORESTES.

I know Orestes in thy heart enshrined.

ELECTRA.

And say wherein are now my prayers fulfill'd? 210

ORESTES.

Myself am he;—seek none than me more dear.

ELECTRA.

Stranger, around me wouldst thou weave some snare?

ORESTES.

Myself against myself would then contrive.

ELECTRA.

Wouldest thou mock at my calamity?

ORESTES.

At mine own grief I mock'd, mock'd I at thine.

ELECTRA.

Art thou Orestes? Thou to whom I speak?

ORESTES.

Myself thou seest, and discernest not;
Yet gazing on this lock of mourning hair,
And in my footprints marking well my track,
Thy flutter'd thoughts did paint me to thine eye. 220

This lock, thy brother's, like in hue to thine,
Mark well, applying it whence it was shorn ;
Mark too this garment, by thy shuttle wrought,
Scenes of the chase, embroider'd by thy hand.
Be calm,—through joy lose not thy self-control ;
For deadly are, I know, those near in blood.

ELECTRA.

Oh ! cherish'd darling of thy father's house,
Hope of our race, thou precious seed, long wept,
Trusting in thy strong arm, thou shalt regain
Thy natal home. O fondly loved, in whom 230
Centre four dear affections ; for perforce,
Thee I must hail as father, and on thee
Love for my mother, justly hated, falls ;
And for my sister, pitilessly slain.
My faithful brother hast thou ever been,
My pride, my awe ;—only may Justice, Strength,
With Zeus supreme, third Saviour, aid thy cause.

ORESTES.

Zeus, Zeus, beholder be thou of these woes ;—
Mark the young brood, reft of their eagle-sire,
Who perish'd in the folds, the snaky toils 240
Of direful serpent ;—orphan'd they endure
The pangs of hunger ; not yet strong of wing
To carry to the nest the eagle's prey.
So mayest thou behold us twain, myself,
And her, Electra, offspring, sire-bereft,
Thus doom'd to common exile from our home.

ELECTRA.

And if of pious father, who of yore
 With gifts thy altar grac'd, thou slay the brood,
 Whence, from like hand, will festive honours come?
 And who, if thou the eaglets slay, henceforth, 250
 Shall trusty omens bear to mortal men?
 Nor will this royal stock, if wither'd up,
 On sacrificial days enrich thy shrine.
 Provide; from low estate to greatness lift
 A house which verily now prostrate seems.

Chorus.

Oh children, Saviours of your Father's hearth,
 Forbear, lest some one should o'erhear your words,
 And all, with gossip-loving tongue rehearse
 To those in power; whom dead I fain would see
 Blazing 'mid spurting pine-wood's pitchy brands. 260

ORESTES.

Of Loxias the mighty oracle
 Will not betray me; He to this emprise
 Hounded me on,—against my inmost reins
 Denouncing freezing curses, should I not
 Requite the authors of my father's death.
 Stript bare and goaded on by forfeiture,
 He bade me slay them as my sire they slew,
 Declaring I should else atonement make
 With my own life, and many grievous woes;—
 For mortal ills, earth-born, to hostile powers 270

† Welcome, he did foreshow, distempers dire,
 A leprous canker, cleaving to the flesh,
 That eats with rancorous tooth the vital strength,
 And through disease blanches the youthful locks.
 And of the Furies other dread assaults
 He pictured, springing from my father's blood.
 For the dark shafts of those beneath the earth,
 (The slain who cry for vengeance to their kin,)
 With frenzy wild, and groundless fear at night,
 Disturb and harass his distracted soul, 280
 Who in the darkness Phcebus sees to knit
 His radiant brow,—they from the city chase
 The wretch all mangled with the brazen scourge.
 Moreover to such caitiff is denied
 Or festal cup to share, or solemn pledge,
 While from the altars, him, a father's wrath
 Unseen excludes ;—him may no host receive
 To cleanse, with purifying rite, from guilt ;—
 Till, friendless, and dishonour'd, dies the wretch,
 The shrivell'd prey of all-destructive doom ;
 Such oracles I needs must trust ; and e'en 290
 Mistrustful were I, vengeance must be wrought ;
 For many divers promptings mingle here ;—
 The god's command, heart-sorrow for my sire,
 And indigence hard-pressing warns of shame,
 If citizens, of mortals most renown'd,
 Who, with heroic spirit, wasted Troy,
 Be slaves of women twain. For, sooth, his soul
 Is womanish, as trial quick may tell.

Chorus.

Ye mighty Fates, end ye the great emprise,
 As Right, with Heaven's high sanction, hath decreed;—³⁰⁰
 "Let tongue of Hatred pay back tongue of Hate;"
 Thus with her mighty utt'rance Justice cries,
 Due penalty exacting for each deed.
 "Let murder on the murderous stroke await!"—
 "Doer of wrong must suffer."—This sage lore,
 Tradition utters, trebly hoar.

ORESTES.

St. δ.

What can I, Sire unblest,
 Prayerfully sing,
 Thee from thy couch of rest
 Hither to wing? 310
 Lo! in that drear confine,
 Darkness is day!
 Vainly to Atreus' line,
 Honours we pay!

Chorus.

St. γ.

My son the wasting jaws of fire
 Quell not the spirit of the dead,
 Full late he manifests his ire.—
 When mourn'd is he whose blood is shed,
 The slayer is reveal'd. In time,
 For slaughter'd parents, righteous wail 320
 Pour'd forth unceasing, doth avail
 To track the crime.

Choephor.

93

ELECTRA.

ANT. α.

In turn, my tearful strain,
O Father, hear!
Hark how thy children twain
Chant anthems drear!
Exiles beside thy tomb,
Sad, suppliant pair;—
No hope relieves our gloom,
Triumphs despair.

330

Chorus.

And yet, if so the gods ordain,
Hereafter, gladder notes shall sound;—
Instead of dirge, joy's rapturous strain
Back to these halls shall lead again
The dear one newly found.

ORESTES.

ST. γ.

Hadst thou, my Sire, 'neath Ilion's walls,
But perish'd by some Lycean's spear,
Glory bequeathing to thy halls,
The while thy fortune shining clear
A lustre o'er the path had shed
Which now in gloom thy children tread;
Beyond the wave, by numbers rear'd, a mound,
No burthen to thy house, thou then hadst found.

340

Chorus.

ANT. β.

Dear to the dear ones in the fight
Who perish'd nobly, thou hadst lain,—

With majesty array'd, and might,
 A king in Pluto's gloomy reign,
 Serving the great ones who command 350
 In Hades.—For in upper day
 King was he over kings, whose hand
 The fateful sceptre wielded, which men obey.

ELECTRA.

ANT— . γ .

Nay, wherefore under Ilion's wall
 With other victims of the spear,
 Shouldest thou, father, ruin'd fall,
 And near Scamander grace a foreign bier?
 Oh rather might the murderous twain
 Themselves have perish'd, basely slain! 3 ~~360~~
 †So from afar the ghastly tale
 Had reach'd thine ear, shielded thyself from ba~~le~~.

Chorus.

Richer, my child, thy words than gold;—
 Bliss Hyperborean they excel.
 †It may not be! Of scourge twofold
 The clang resounds.—Already dwell
 'Neath earth your champions; they who hold
 Loath'd empire here have hands unclean.— 37 ~~38~~
 On children falls the pang most keen.

ELECTRA.

St. δ.

Like dart, thy word of dread,
 Piercing mine ear, hath sped.

Zeus, Zeus, upsending from below
Upon man's daring, crafty deed,
The late avenging blow,—
†To parents thou dost deal their righteous meed.

Chorus.

ST. 4.

Mine be it, in exultant strain,
To celebrate the howl of pain
From caitiff smitten to the death,
From woman yielding up her breath! 380
†For why conceal the frenzied throes
That shake my troubled soul? There blows
At my heart's prow a tempest dire;—
'Tis rancour's breath, 'tis vengeful ire.

ORESTES.

ANT. 5.

Oh that, his arm of might
Baring, great Zeus would smite,
†Woe, woe,—the ruthless pair.
Come peace to this domain!
For anarchy let Justice reign! 390
Earth, and ye powers of Hades, hear my prayer!

Chorus.

For law it is when on the plain
Blood hath been shed, new blood must fall.
Carnage doth to the Fury call;
Avenger of the earlier slain,
She comes, new Ruin leading in her train.

ELECTRA.

ST. ε'.

Earth, and ye powers who rule below,
 †Dread curses that avenge the slain,
 Behold us, outcast, wretched twain ;
 Poor remnant of the Atridæ ;—whither go ? 400
 Oh ! sov'reign Zeus, what refuge from our woe ?

•
Chorus.

ANT. ε'.

Throbbeth my woman's heart with fear,
 The while thy dirge assails mine ear ;
 And one while hopeful courage wanes,
 And darkness o'er my inmost reins
 Broods, as I list the doleful sound ;
 †Then once again my changeful heart,
 With hope elate, bids grief depart,
 And fair the prospect smileth round.

ORESTES.

ANT. ε'.

Can grief by flattery be subdued, 410
 Or sooth'd by fawning ? No, to quell the pain
 By parent's hate engender'd, charms are vain ;
 Like savage wolf that ravens for its food,
 Tameless from birth is sorrow's torturing brood.

Chorus.

ST. ζ.

With Arian beat I strike my breast ;
 My outstretch'd hands in wild unrest,
 With Cissian mourner's rhythmic woe,
 In quick succession,—to and fro,
 Shower from all quarters blow on blow ;

While with the hurly rings amain

My batter'd and distracted brain.

420

ELECTRA.

Cruel, all-daring, Mother, woe!

Alas, as foeman buries foe,

Thy lord,—no liegemen near,

No friends to shed the tear,—

Thou hadst the heart unvail'd to send below.

ORESTES.

ST. η.

Thou speakest in his shame our own;

She shall our Sire's disgrace atone,

Far as the gods prevail,

Far as my hands avail;

Then may I perish when she lieth prone! 430

Chorus.

ANT. η.

Maim'd was the corpse;—this also hear;

Mangled she laid him on his bier,

That for thy life his fate

Might be too sore a weight.

Thy father's death-pangs hearken, ghastly, drear!

ELECTRA.

ANT. ζ.

Our Father's lot thy words proclaim;

While I, despised, a thing of nought,

Thrust forth like vicious cur with shame,

Forgot to smile; alone, I sought

Solace in weeping,—anguish-fraught. 440

Hearing the tale my lips impart,
Grave it, my brother, on thy inmost heart.

Chorus.

Piercing thine ear, oh may my word
Find access to the depths within !
True is the tale. Thy spirit gird
To hear what yet thou hast not heard !
Now, with undaunted heart the strife begin.

ORESTES.

ST. 6.

Thine aid, O Father, to thy dear ones lend !

ELECTRA.

Weeping, my voice with his I blend.

Chorus.

Our prayers, in concert, to the shades descend ;
Give ear, and rising to the day 450
Join thou the dire affray.

ORESTES.

ANT. 6.

Ares shall cope with Ares,—Right with Right.

ELECTRA.

Ye gods, give righteous judgment in the fight.

Chorus.

Hearing your prayers, I tremble : hid in night,
Tarries from Eld the doom of Fate ;
Invoked it come th, sure, though late.

Choephor.

99

ORESTES and ELECTRA.

ST. 4.

Oh curse that in our house doth reign !

Discordant Atè's murd'rous blow !

Alas intolerable pain !

460

Alas for cureless woe !

Chorus.

ANT. 4.

No foreign aid can bring relief ;

No ! from yourselves the cure must flow.

'Tis blood must staunch your household grief.

So chant the gods below.

Chorus-Leader.

Hear, blessed powers ;

Beneath the earth our orisons attend !

And with aspect benign,

Succour and conquest to the children send !

ORESTES.

My father, in no kingly fashion slain,

470

To me, thy suppliant, grant to sway thy house.

ELECTRA.

I too, my father, need thy gracious aid,

When wrought is base Ægisthus' heavy doom.

ORESTES.

So mortal men to thee shall dedicate

The solemn banquet ;—else, unhonour'd thou,

When grateful reek rich offerings to the dead.

ELECTRA.

Nuptial libations of my heritage
I too will bring from the paternal home,
And chief in honour will this tomb adorn.

ORESTES.

O Earth, send up my sire to guide the fray. 480

ELECTRA.

Endow us, Proserpine, with glorious might.

ORESTES.

Think, Father, of the bath that reaved thy life.

ELECTRA.

Think of the net in which they tangled thee.

ORESTES.

In shackles, not of brass, wast thou ensnared.

ELECTRA.

Basely envelop'd in the treacherous folds.

ORESTES.

Art thou not roused by these reproaches, Sire ?

ELECTRA.

Dost thou not lift erect thine honour'd head ?

ORESTES.

Either send Justice, ally to thy friends,
Or give them in like wily grasp to close,
If overthrown, thou wouldst o'erthrow in turn. 490

ELECTRA.

And hearken, Father, this my last appeal ;
Behold thy fledglings nestled on thy tomb ;
Pity thy progeny of either sex,
Nor Pelops' remnant seed exterminate ;
For in their life thou livest, even in death.
For children are as voices to their sire
His fame prolonging ;—or as buoyant corks,
That from the deep upbear the sunken net.
Thyself art saved, if thou dost grant our prayer. 500

Chorus.

Unblamed in sooth have ye your speech prolong'd,
Due to his tomb, and unlamented fate.
But since to action now thy soul is braced,
To work forthwith ! and in the god confide.

ORESTES.

So be it ! yet not out of course I ask
What mean these off'rings ? By what motive sway'd,
Seeks she too late to med'cine cureless bale ?
For to the dead, who heeds it not, she sends
A sorry tribute ;—I divine it not !
Her crime o'ertops the gift ;—for should we pour 510
Earth's treasures to atone for one man's blood,
Vain were the toil ;—so runs the ancient saw.
But if thou knowest answer to my prayer.

Chorus.

That can I, son, for I was there ;—by dreams,
And troublous terrors of the night appall'd,
The godless woman sent these sacred rites.

ORESTES.

Heard ye the dream, and truly can rehearse ?

Chorus.

She, as herself relates, a dragon bare.

ORESTES.

And what the scope, the issue, of the dream ?

Chorus.

In swathing-clothes it bounded as a child. 520

ORESTES.

What nurture might the new-born horror crave ?

Chorus.

She, in her dream, herself held forth the breast.

ORESTES.

How by the pest the nipple then unscathed ?

Chorus.

. With nurture-milk it suck'd the clotted blood.

ORESTES.

Not vain the dream but by her husband sent ;—

Chorus.

In terror shriek'd she, waking up from sleep,
And many torches, in the darkness quench'd,
Gleam'd through the palace in our mistress' aid ;
Libations to the tomb forthwith she sends
Devising for her woe a sovereign cure. 530

ORESTES.

I to this earth and to my father's tomb
Pray that this dream be consummate in me,
And as I read it, sooth, it tallies well.
For if the snake, quitting the self-same womb,
Was girded straightway with my swathing-clothes,
And, gaping round the breast that nourish'd me,
Suck'd with my nurture-milk the clotted blood,
While she in terror, at the portent shriek'd ;—
Needs must it be, that she who rear'd the pest
A forceful death must die. I, dragon-like, 540
Myself shall slay her, as her dream declares.—
Thyself I choose expounder of this sign.

Chorus.

So let it be ! But now direct thy friends,
These how to act, or those aloof to bide.

ORESTES.

Hear then, in brief ;—Sister, go thou within ;
But you I counsel to conceal my plans.
For as with guile an honour'd man they slew,
Themselves with guile shall be entrapp'd, and die
In the same toils, foretold by Loxias,
Apollo Lord, no faithless seer of yore.— 550
For I, equipp'd for travel, with this man,
With Pylades, will reach the outer gate ;
I as a stranger ;—he as ransom-friend ;—
Familiar both with the Parnassian speech,
The tongue of Phocis we will imitate,
And if no friendly warder, on the plea
That by dire evils is the house possess'd,

Will give us entrance, we without will bide,
 Until some passer guess our plight, and say,
 "If that Ægisthus knoweth, being at home, 560
 Why 'gainst the suppliant doth he shut the door?"
 If, passing then the threshold of the gates,
 Him I discover on my father's seat,—
 Or should he meet me,—ere he raise his eyes
 To set them on me, or can speak the word,
 "Whence is this stranger?"—I will lay him dead,
 Spitting his body round my nimble steel.
 The Fury thus, of gore insatiate,
 Shall blood untemper'd quaff, third, crowning draught.

[*To ELECTRA.*]

Go thou,—keep watchful guard within the house, 570
 That all, well order'd, fitly may combine.

[*To the Chorus.*]

To you a tongue of wisdom I commend,
 To speak in season, or from speech refrain.—

[*To PYLADES.*]

And for the rest let this man look to it,
 When in the strife of swords this arm hath won.

[*Exit ORESTES and PYLADES. ELECTRA enters the palace.*]*Chorus.*

ST. 1.

Full many a horror drear
 And ghastly, Earth doth rear;—
 With direful monsters teems encircling Ocean;
 Meteors, with threatening sheen, 580
 Hang heaven and earth between;—
 The tempest's wrath still raves with wild commotion;
 These, and dire wingèd things, and things that crawl,
 Thou mayst describe them all.

STRO. *α*.

But man's audacious might
What words can paint aright,
Or woman's daring spirit who may tell ?
Her passion's frenzied throes,
Co-mates of mortal woes ?
For love unlovely, when its evil spell
'Mong brutes or men the feebler sex befools,
Conjugal bands o'errules.

590

STRO. *β*.

Hear ye, not sway'd by Folly's breath,
What Thestius' daughter plann'd ;—
The mother doom'd her child to death,
Firing the fatal brand.
Burning when first he cried,
An infant from the womb ;—
Like-aged with him it died,
When dawn'd his day of doom.

600

ANT. *β*.

Another woman hatred dire
Awakens,—Scylla, famed of old ;—
For Minos' sake who slew her sire.
Seduced by necklaces of gold,
His Cretan gift, the deed to dare ;
From Nisus, as in sleep he lay,
Ruthless she cut th' immortal hair,
And Hermes seized his prey.

610

STRO. γ'.

But since these direful woes have burst,
 †Untimely, into song :—
 Be the foul wedlock too accursed,
 That doth this palace wrong.—
 And cursèd be the plot that snared
 (By woman's brain devised,)
 The armèd chief who foemen scared,
 Whom faithful lieges prized.
 Dear is to me the unstain'd hearth, and dear
 In woman's hand the unaudacious spear.

ANT. γ'.

But first of woes in every clime, 620
 The Lemnian is deplored ;—
 And still the most detested crime
 As Lemnian is abhorred.
 Branded with infamy by men,
 The impious disappear ;
 For whom the righteous gods condemn,
 No mortal dares revere.—
 The lore which thus we chant in choral strain,
 Say ye, doth Reason at her bar arraign ?

STRO. δ'.

Right through the lungs doth Justice' hand
 Drive home the bitter steel ;
 †For all must perish who withstand 630
 Her mandates, and with reckless heel,
 Trample high Jove's command.

ANT. δ'.

Firm based is Justice ; Fate of yore
 Forged weapon for the blow ;
 Deep-soul'd Erinnys doth restore
 Th' avenger to his home, and, lo !
 He pays the bloody score.

[*Enter ORESTES and PYLADES, with attendants, all in the garb of travellers.*]

ORESTES.

[*Knocking at the gate.*

Boy, hear the knocking, at the outer gate ;— 640
 Who is within ? Hola ! Again I call.—
 For the third time I crave a parley here,
 If that Ægisthus heeds the stranger's rights.

Attendant.

Well, well, I hear. Who art thou, friend, and whence ?

ORESTES.

Me to the rulers of this house announce,
 For unto them, bearer of news, I come.
 Haste, for Night's dusky car rolls on apace,
 And time it is for weary traveller
 Anchor to drop in hospitable home.
 Let one in trust, a woman bearing rule, 650
 Come forth ; yet more decorous were a man.
 For when by bashfulness the tongue is sway'd
 Darken'd is speech ;—boldly man speaks to man,
 And tells his message forth without reserve.

[*Exit Attendant.*

[CLYTEMNESTRA comes forth from the palace with attendants.]

✓
CLYTEMNESTRA.

Speak, strangers, what your need ? for here is found
Whate'er beseemeth royal halls like these ;—
Warm baths, the easeful couch that charmeth toil,
And fair regard from justice-beaming eyes.
But if your mission here doth counsel crave,
'Tis men's concern :—we will inform them straight. 660

ORESTES.

From Phocis I, a Daulian, stranger here.—
What time my home I left, for Argos bound,
Starting on foot, with baggage self-equipp'd,
A man to me unknown, as I to him,
Met me, inquired my route and told me his.
Strophius, the Phocian, as in talk I learn'd.
"Stranger," he said, "since Argos is thy goal,
Say to the parents,"—strictly mark my words,—
"Dead is Orestes ;—grave it on thy mind ;—
Whether the counsel of his friends prevail 670
To bring him home, or give him sepulture,
Alien for aye ;—bear thou their mandates back ;
For now the brazen urn doth shroud from sight
The ashes of the hero duly wept."
Such words I heard, and tell thee ;—if to those
Who here bear rule I speak, kin to the dead,
I know not ;—but 'tis meet his sire should know.

ELECTRA.

Woe's me! Then are we utterly undone!
 O household Fury, hard to grapple with,
 Alas how many, seemingly secure, 680
 Thy ruthless arrow hitteth from afar,
 While wretched me thou hast stript bare of friends.
 And now, Orestes, who, by lucky chance,
 His foot from ruin's slough had well nigh freed,
 Cancels by death our cherish'd hope, sole cure
 Of the ill revelry that reigneth here.

ORESTES.

With hosts so richly dower'd I fain had sought
 Acquaintance and kind cheer, as messenger
 Bearing more welcome tidings; for what bond
 More friendly than of stranger to his hosts? 690
 Yet, not to consummate to friends a charge
 So weighty, deem'd I an impiety,
 After assent and pledges of good-will.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Worthy regard not less shalt thou receive;
 Nor have the less fair welcome to this house.
 Another all the same had brought thy news.
 But time it is that strangers who have spent
 The day in travel should their strength recruit.

[*To an Attendant.*]

To the men's chambers usher him as guest,
 His escort too, and fellow traveller. 700

There be they tended as befits this house.
 Do ye my will as who must give account.
 Ourselves will to the rulers of this house
 Impart the tidings, and not poor in friends,
 We will take counsel touching this mischance.

[*Exit all except the Chor.* 225]

Chorus.

Dear handmaidens ! Sisters dear !
 When, oh when, full voiced and clear,
 Shall we, for Orestes' sake,
 Loud the joyous Pæan wake ?

Hallow'd Earth ! Oh shrine rever'd !
 Funeral barrow high uprear'd,
 O'er the naval hero-king,
 Now give ear, deliv'rance bring !

710

Strikes the hour ;—persuasive Guile
 Enters now the lists. The while
 Hermes leads to watch the fight
 Of murd'rous swords and subtle wile,
 †Eriñnys' brood of Night.

[*Enter CALISSA, the Nurse, weeping.*]

Chorus-Leader.

This stranger, as it seems, is causing bale,
 For I behold Orestes' nurse in tears ;
 Where wendest thou, Calissa, past the gates ?
 Sorrow, I trow, unbidden goes with thee.

720

Nurse.

mistress bade me summon with all speed
 gisthus to the strangers, that he may
 re clearly learn, as man from man, this tale
 wly announced. Before the menial train,
 e, at the tidings by these strangers brought,
 ath mournful eyes a lurking smile hath veil'd,
 ulting in events joyous for her,
 t to this house with direst issue fraught;—
 t he no doubt will in his soul rejoice,
 aring the tale. Alas! unhappy me! 730
 w did the ancient troubles, hard to bear,
 ose blended horror darken'd Atreus' house,
 th anguish pierce my heart! But ne'er before,
 ve I a sorrow like to this endured.
 other ills I patiently have borne,
 e dear Orestes, darling of my soul,
 om from his mother's womb I fondly rear'd,
 ose piercing summons waked me up at night,
 I for whose sake full many a fruitless toil
 ore ungrudging;—for like lamb unwean'd, 740
 e witless infant we perforce must rear
 ording to its mood;—how otherwise!—
 e while in swathing-clothes no voice it hath,
 en press'd by hunger, thirst, or nature's call,
 e wilful is each tender organ's play.
 h wants presaging, ay, and oft deceived
 cleanser of his swaddling bands, I ween,
 ler and nurse had common duty there.
 us install'd in double handicraft

The young Orestes for his father rear'd.

Oh wretched me to hear that he is dead ;

750

But now I go, the spoiler of this house

To seek ;—right gladly will he learn the tale.

Chorus.

And how equipp'd doth she then bid him come ?

Nurse.

How ? Speak again that I may clearly know.

Chorus.

Whether with body-guards, or all alone ?

Nurse.

Spear-bearing followers she bids him bring.

Chorus.

Bear not this message to our hateful lord.

But with all speed do thou with cheerful mien

Bid him approach, that fearless he may hear ;

For crooked word the messenger makes straight. 760

Nurse.

How ! art thou sound in mind with news so sad ?

Chorus.

But haply Zeus a change-wind may vouchsafe.

Nurse.

Nay, with Orestes vanish'd all our hopes.

Chorus.

Not yet! Dull prophet might interpret here.

Nurse.

What! knowest aught beyond what hath been told?

Chorus.

Go, bear thy message. Do as we enjoin,
What the gods purpose, that will they effect.

Nurse.

Be it, I go and will obey thy words,
Fair be the issue by the gift of heaven!

[*Exit.*

Chorus.

STRO. α.

Sire of Olympian gods, thy suppliant calls! 770

Oh waft propitious Fortune to these halls!

Dispensing justice with omniscient might,

†Bless thou my longing sight!

This boon I crave! Guard him, great Zeus, and save!

STRO. β.

Him, in these halls ancestral, place

Before his foeman;—bring them face to face!

Him if thou lift to greatness, Power divine,

Requital double, triple, shall be thine.

ANT. α.

Mark of thy friend the orphan son, 780

A colt i-yoked in sorrow's trace;

†Set thou a limit to his toilsome race!

Grant him to reach the goal, his labour done,

With steps firm planted, and well-order'd pace!

STRO. γ.

You too, frequenting the recess
 †Of wealth-rejoicing homes, I now address ;
 Hear, ye consentient Gods ! Through bloody deed
 Retributive, wash out the gore, 790
 Dread heirloom from those slain of yore.
 Let murder in this palace cease to breed,
 When paid the bloody score !

μεσφδ.

Thou tenant of the cave,—great Spirit,
 Give to the hero to inherit
 His halls ancestral ;—may his eyes,
 Fearless and bright,
 Peer freely forth from sorrow's veiled night.

ANT. γ.

†May Maia's son, well-versed in guile,
 Upon the right propitious smile ! 800
 With dark and subtle word, by night
 Men's eyes he shrouds in gloom,—by day
 No radiance can transcend his ray,
 And many a hidden thing is brought to light.

STRO. δ.

The work achieved, we'll chant the glorious ode ;
 Our woman's strain,
 Propitious, with the mourners' string'd refrain,
 Shall ransom this abode.
 †Then shall we own the sway of righteous laws,
 While Atè from our friends her curse withdraws. 810

ANT. β'.

When the fierce business must be done,
 When in thine ear she whimpers forth, "My Son ;"
 Steeling thy heart, recall thy slaughter'd sire,
 †And consummate unblamed the vengeance dire.

ANT. δ'.

Holding the heart of Perseus in thy breast,
 For the dear love
 Of friends below the earth, and friends above,
 †Complete the sacrifice ;—
 Plant thou grim Death within,—dire guest,—
 And let the murd'rer forfeit murder's price. 820

[*Enter Ægisthus.*]

ÆGISTHUS.

Not uninvoked I come, but hither call'd ;—
 For strangers, as I learn, are here arrived,
 Bearers of news, unwelcome to our ears,—
 Orestes' death,—which, charged upon this house,
 From former wound still ulcerate and sore,
 To me a burden were, dripping with fear.
 But say,—these tidings must I hold for true,
 Or rumours deem them, coin'd by women's fears, 830
 That aimless cleave the air, and aimless die ?
 Knowest thou aught that may my mind assure ?

Chorus.

We have but heard, go thou thyself within,
 Question these strangers ;—second-hand reports
 Avail not as to hear the tale oneself.

ÆGISTHUS.

Fain would I see the messenger and learn
 Whether himself was present at the death,
 Or if from blind report this tale he heard ;
 A wakeful mind he will not soon deceive.
[Exit into the palace.]

Chorus.

Zeus, great Zeus, how frame my cry 840
 Thine aid to win ?
 How, invoking thee on high,
 My strain begin ?

For anon with murderous blow,
 Either shall the gory blade
 Atreus' royal house o'erthrow,—
 Prone in dust for ever laid,—
 Or in Freedom's sacred name,
 Kindling fire and holy light,
 Shall the rightful heir reclaim
 †Wealth and crown,—his twofold right. 850

Sole against the tyrant pair,
 To such deadly grapple hies
 Agamemnon's godlike heir ;—

None to follow if he dies!*

Crown, oh crown, the great emprise!

ÆGISTHUS.

[*Behind the scene.*]

Alas, woe's me! Alas!

Chorus.

Hark! Hark! again!

How is't? What's wrought within?

Stand we aloof while Slaughter does her work,

Lest we as partners in the deed appear:

For now achieved the issue is of strife.

[*The Chorus retire to the further side of the tomb.*]

Servant.

[*Rushing out of the palace.*]

Oh woe! oh grievous woe! our master's slain; 860

Yet once again, and for the third time, woe.

Ægisthus is no more.—With utmost speed

[*He knocks at the door of the women's palace.*]

With crowbars from the hinges heave the doors;

The women's rooms unclosed;—strength need we here,

Not for the slain; what booteth aid to him?

Alas! Alas! what, shout I to the deaf,

Or clamour vainly in dull sleepers' ears?

What doeth Clytemnestra? Where is she?

Her neck it seems toucheth the razor's edge,

Herself, ere long shall perish, justly slain. 870

* *Ἐφεδρος*.—An antagonist in reserve. The Chorus uses the technical language of wrestlers in the games.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

[Enters hurriedly, unattended.]

What is't? What tumult raise ye in the house?

Servant.

The dead, I tell you, now the living slays.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Alas! of these dark words the sense I catch;

Through guile we perish, as through guile we slew.

A deadly axe reach hither;— *[Exit Servant.]*

We shall see

Whether I'm vanquish'd here, or vanquisher;

For to this crisis hath the evil come.

[ORESTES and PYLADES come forth from the palace, the door of which remains open.]

ORESTES.

Thee too I seek;—that caitiff hath his due.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Alas! beloved Ægisthus, art thou dead?

ORESTES.

Dost love this man? With him, in the same tomb, 880

Then shalt thou lie;—still faithful found in death.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hold! Hold! my son;—Revere, my child, this breast

From which, a sleeping infant, thou full oft,

With toothless gums, thy nurture-milk hast suck'd.

ORESTES.

Speak, Pylades ;—Through filial reverence,
Shall I forbear to shed a mother's blood ?

PYLADES.

The Pythian oracles, still unfulfill'd,
Where are they, and thine own firm-plighted vows ?
Choose all for foemen rather than the gods.

ORESTES.

Thou hast prevail'd ; wisely thou promptest me ;

[*To CLYTEMNESTRA.*

So follow ;—by his side I thee would slay. 890

In life thou didst exalt him o'er my sire ;
Since him thou lovest, sleep with him in death ;
Whom thou wast bound to love thou didst abhor.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I nourish'd thee ;—with thee I would grow old.

ORESTES.

Thou, slayer of my father, dwell with me !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Fate was, my child, accomplice in these woes.

ORESTES.

And Fate doth now no less thy death ordain.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Dost thou not reverence thy mother's curse ?

ORESTES.

My mother, thou didst cast me forth to woe.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Not outcast wast thou in a friendly house. 900

ORESTES.

Sold doubly was I, scion of free sire.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Where then the price for which I barter'd thee?

ORESTES.

It shameth me, in sooth, to charge thee home.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But tell with mine the errors of thy sire.

ORESTES.

Sitting at home blame not abroad who toils.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Wretched we women, sever'd from our mates.

ORESTES.

The husband's toil supports the wife at home.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thy mother, O my child, art nerved to slay?

ORESTES.

Thyself art guilty of thy death, not I.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Take heed, beware thy mother's vengeful hounds. 910

ORESTES.

Those of my sire how 'scape if thee I spare?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Living, vain moanings to a tomb I pour.

ORESTES.

Ay, for my father's fate doth work thy doom.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah me! this man I bare and rear'd a snake.

ORESTES.

True prophet was thy dream-engender'd fear.
Him thou didst slay whom thou shouldst not have slain.
So doom unseemly suffer in thy turn.

[ORESTES drags his mother into the palace.]

Chorus.

E'en of this pair I weep the twofold woe.
But since Orestes hath the bloody height
Achieved of dire revenge, one hope remains,
Not quench'd the eye of Atreus' royal house. 920

STRO. 4.

As fell at last on Priam's guilty race
The late avenging Fate;—
A twofold lion now, a twofold Mars
Treads Atreus' halls elate.
Sent from the Pythian shrine
By oracle divine,
Conquest doth now the fugitive await.

STRO. β .

Hail jubilant the house redeem'd from bale!
 The godless pair no more
 Shall waste its gather'd store.
 Hail, joyous riddance, hail!

930

ANT. α .

Requital, guileful power, in stratagem
 Dark-veil'd who takes delight,
 Daughter of Zeus,—Justice yclept by men,
 Pointing their aim aright,—
 †Doth, with firm hand, the knife
 Unsheath for mortal strife;
 While 'gainst her foes she breathes destruction's blight.

STRO. γ .

†For Loxias, the king,
 Who in Parnassian cavern holds his seat,
 Doth vengeance hither bring,
 Guilelessly guileful; lame, yet sure her feet.
 Weighty the saw; Zeus, though divine,
 No consort is of guilt; to his high sway
 Beseemeth mortals homage meet to pay.
 Clearly the light doth shine!

940

ANT. β .

†Reft was I of the sun whose sudden ray
 Did with new joy illume
 These halls, long sunk in gloom;
 It gleam'd,—then died away.

950

ANT. γ.

†Anon, the cheering light,
 New kindled, in these halls shall shine once more,
 What time, with lustral rite,
 From the polluted hearth is purged the gore,
 And Atè put to flight. With form benign,
 Fortune, long time an alien, comes to claim
 Her home, redeem'd from shame.
 Clearly the light doth shine !

[*The scene opens, and ORESTES is discovered standing over the bodies. PYLADES with him and servants display the robe of AGAMEMNON.*]

ORESTES.

Behold the tyrants of this land, the twain 960
 My sire who murder'd, and this palace reaved.
 Majestic once sat they upon their thrones,
 United now, as by their fate appears,
 And faithful to their pledges, e'en in death.
 To slay my wretched sire conjoin'd they swore,
 Conjoin'd to die ;—well have they kept their oath.
 But further, ye who hearken to these woes,
 Mark this device, my wretched father's snare,
 His hands which fetter'd and his feet which yoked.
 Unfold it,—form a ring,—and, standing near, 970
 Display the Hero's death-robe, that the Sire,
 Not mine, but He who all these woes surveys,
 Helios, my mother's impious deeds may mark ;
 So in my trial, at some future time,
 He by my side may stand, and witness bear

That justly I did prosecute to death
 My mother;—for of base Ægisthus' doom
 Recketh me not;—he, as adulterer,
 The lawful forfeit of his crime hath paid.
 But for the woman who this snare devised
 Against the husband, unto whom she bore
 The tender weight of children 'neath her zone,
 Burden once dear, but now her deadly foe; 980
 What thinkest thou of her? Ay, was she not
 A viper, or torpedo, which by touch
 Corrupteth where it bites not? true if judged
 For sheer audacity and unjust heart.
 Mark ye this pest,—how shall I title it?
 A mesh to catch wild beasts,—a deadly pall
 That curtains round the bier? in truth a net,
 A very snare, a feet-entangling robe;
 Device like this the robber might employ,
 A guest-decoyer, who profession makes
 Of rapine, catching many in such nets, 990
 With many a bold and ruthless deed elate.
 May no such woman house with me! Ye gods,
 Devote me rather to a childless death!

Chorus.

Alas, for doings fraught with doom!
 Slaughter'd he found a gory tomb.
 Woe! Woe!
 To the survivor grief is but in bloom.

ORESTES.

Did she or did she not? To me this robe
Attests that she Ægisthus' sword imbrued ;
Behold the death-stain tallies with the time, 1000
Marring the garment's vermeil-tinctured hues.
One while I praise my slaughter'd sire, anon,
As present at the scene I wail his death,
This robe invoking that achieved his doom.
Our deeds, our woes, our wretched race I mourn,
Reaping from victory pollution dire.

Chorus.

Alas ! no son of mortal race,
Unscathed the path of life may trace !
Woe ! Woe !
Fadeth one grief, another comes apace.

ORESTES.

That ye betimes may learn, (since I myself 1010
Know not the issue,) for as charioteer
With steeds ungovern'd, from the course I swerve ;
Thoughts past control are whirling me along,
Their captive slave ; while terror in my heart
Her pæan and her frenzied dance prepares.
Hear me, my friends, while Reason holds her seat ;
With Justice' sanction I my mother smote,
My father's slayer, a god-hated pest.
As prime incitement to the daring act
Of Loxias I plead this oracle ;
That, if I slew, blameless I should be held ; 1020

But if I fail'd;—my doom I will not speak ;
 For bowshot cannot reach such mighty woe.
 And now behold,—bearing this olive-branch,
 Enwreath'd with wool, as suppliant I seek
 Earth's navel stone, Apollo's seat, where burns
 The flame of fire that quenchless hath been call'd,
 Fleeing from kindred blood. For other shrine
 Did Loxias forbid me to approach.
 In future time for me, let Argive men
 Bear faithful witness how these woes were wrought; 1030
 Exile and wanderer from this land I roam,
 And dead or living leave this fame behind.

Chorus.

Noble thy deed, then vent not from thy mouth
 Ill-omen'd words, nor speak with bodeful tongue.
 Since thou hast Argos' state redeem'd, and lopp'd,
 With lucky stroke, from serpent twain the head.

[*The Furies are seen rising in the background.*]

ORESTES.

Ah! Ah! ye handmaids, Gorgon-like they come,
 Vested with sable stoles, their locks entwined
 With clustering snakes. No longer may I bide.

Chorus.

Dearest of mortals to thy father, say, 1040
 What phantoms scare thee?—be not quell'd by fear.

ORESTES.

No airy, woe-engender'd phantoms these ;
Too well I know my mother's vengeful hounds.

Chorus.

Still reeking is the blood upon thy hand,
Hence is it that distraction smites thy brain.

ORESTES.

Apollo, Lord, swarming they press around,
And from their eyes there drippeth loathsome gore.

Chorus.

One cleanser hast thou ;—touch thou Loxias,
He from these miseries will thee redeem.

ORESTES.

Viewless to you these shapes, I see them clear ; 1050
They drive me forth,—no longer can I bide.

[*He rushes out.*]

Chorus.

But blessings on thee, and, in direst strait,
May He who views thee graciously protect!

[*While singing the following Ode the Chorus enters
the palace.*]

Thrice the Atridan storm hath burst
O'er Mycenæ's halls.

†Child-devouring horror first
Brooded o'er these walls.

Next a king's disaster came,
When the chief who led
Hellas' warriors, known to fame,
In the bath lay dead.
Now, behold a third is come,—
Saviour, shall I say, or doom ?
From what quarter sped ?
Full-accomplish'd, when shall Fate,
Lull'd to rest, her stormy ire abate ?

1060

NOTES.

CHOEPHORI.

56. For μένει χρονίζοντ' ἄχη βρύει read μένει χρονίζοντας ἄχη, omitting βρύει.

61. For παναρκέτας νόσου βρύειν read παγκαρτέρας νόσου βρύειν.

65. For ἐκ μίας ὁδοῦ I conjecture ἐκ [τρικυ] μίας ὁμοῦ; also omit the prosaic τὸν before χερομίσῃ.

67. For καθαίροντες ἰοῦσαν ἄτην, perhaps καθαίροντες [καθαίρ]ουσιν μάτην. These changes, suggested by the sense, complete 60—63 and 64—67 as antistrophic. I believe 68—72 and 73—77 to be also antistrophic; but here dwell only on the changes important to a translator.

In 73, for βίαι φερομένων read βίαια φυρωμένων, and in 71, 72 read—

[δεῖ] δίκαια, μὴ δίκαια,
[μὴ] πρέποντ' . . .

and for ἀρχαῖς βίου, which is unintelligible, the least correction is ἀρχαῖσί μου; yet I suspect that the poet wrote ἀκριβέσι; “exact in virtue.”

145—156. Read ἀπότρεπον for ἀπότροπον, governing accus. ἄχος, and join κεδνῶν with ἀπότρεπον. Then τ' after κεδνῶν must be omitted or changed to γ'. In v. 150 σεβασω is clearly corrupt. We need a tribrach, beginning with two consonants, to support the ε of κλύε. I conjecture σκεπανὰ, “things covered.” Besides, καναχές, “tinkling as metal,” is an improbable epithet of a tear. The line has no metre. Aldus edited κἀναχες, which suggests to me κἀναχέϊτ'. Ὀλό-

μενον is also an unpleasant epithet, especially as joined with ὀλομένῳ δεσπότη. I incline to put ὀλόμενον in brackets.

155. Ἄρης in that position cannot be right. I think it should be μάχης. A verb is deficient. One may think of ἐπιπάλλοι μάχης for ἐπιπάλλων ἄρης. In that case ἂν may well be supplied before ἀναλυτήρ, since τίς ἂν with the optative expresses "Oh that!" I further think that χερσὶν παλίντονα ἐν should be κεροῖν παλυτόνοι, since bows and not arrows are παλίντονα. Perhaps the piece is antistrophic, and some further errors may thus be discerned.

271. τάσδε νῶν.—By all means adopt Hermann's τάσδ' αἰνῶν.

361. The word ὄφελον is essential. We may read
 πάρος δ' [ὄφελόν γ'] οἱ κτανόντες νιν οὕτω δαμῆναι. ¶
 if in the strophe, 343, we read

τέκνων τ' ἂν κελεύθοις ἐπίστρεπτον αἰῶ κομίσσας.
i. e., τ' ἂν for τε, and κομίσσας for κτίσσας, which make good metre.

366. For ὀδυνᾶσαι I think οὐ δύνασαι is far better than δύνασαι.

377. χειρὶ, ὅμως, τελεῖται appear to me all corrupt. I wish to punctuate after πανούργῳ, and read τέλει σύ.

384. φρενὸς θεῖον is of course wrong, and the two next lines have several redundant words. As a *first approximation* I suggest—

τί γὰρ κεύ | θῶ; φρενὶ θῦον ἔμπα |
 | ποτᾶται, παροῖθ' ἐν τε πρόρας ἄηται
 [κῆρος] ἔγκοτον στύγος.

The metre is now good.

Κῆρος, Homericè. The last line, I imagine, was interpreted δριμύς καρδίας θυμός; words which found their way into the text and pushed out κῆρος. In place of φρενι θῦον, "raging in my heart," I should prefer something that means a *soul-storm*. I have thought of φρενοθυίας, or φρενοθυιάδ' after κεύθῳ.

390. For κάρανα, which is unmeaning, read Τύρανα.

391. For πιστὰ γένοιτο read Πιστὰ θ' ἔλοιτο.

400. Read with Porson ἴδεσθε for ἴδετε, and omit φθιμένων.

408. Omit κλυούσῃ, then in place of ὅταν δ' αὐτ' read—

. . . . πρὸς ἔπος· τότ' ἂν δ' αὐτ'
ἐπαλθῆς χαρὰ ρεῖ' ἀπέστασεν ἄλγος,
πρὸς τ' ἔσανεν αἰκάλως.

Ὅρ. πῶς σάναντες τύχοιμεν ἂν, τάπερ
πάθοιμεν ἄχα πρὸς γ' ἐτών;

and omit τεκομένων. All this is monstrously corrupt in the MS.

613. For δκαίρως δὲ I suggest Ἀχαιοὺς γε, as expressing at least the right syntax and general sense. For ἀπεύχετον by all means read ἀπενκτέον with Blomfield. Next, for σέβας τιῶν δὲ read σεβαστέον δὲ, and the sentence as a whole will be clear. Only ἐπικότῳ remains corrupt. The emphasis of Clytemnestra's guilt will be marked by δῆοις ὑπερκότῳ, "triumphant over the foe;" as in Agam. 795, ὑπερκότους, "triumphant, successful." (Whether the true spelling be ὑπέρκοπος does not here concern us.)

633. A verb is lost, to which παρεκβάντες is nominative. For γὰρ οὐ λάξ perhaps γὰρ [ᾤλεσαν] λάξ: οὐ makes sheer nonsense. Πατρός is also deficient in the antistrophe. For †διμασε αἱμάτων perhaps δόμοισι [τοῖς πατρός, χ'] αἱμάτων, which will fulfil the metrical conditions.

715. τὸν Νύχιον is not explicable. I think some one has well suggested τὰν Νυχίαν, "the Fury, Child of Night," Eumen. 311.

773, 774. Read—

δὸς τύχας πλεῖν δόμοις κυρίως, πανσόφῳ
σθένει μαιομένα σ' ἰδεῖν διαδικάσαι.

783. For ἐν δρόμῳ προστιθεῖς read κὰν δρόμῳ προστιθείης.

784, 785. Read (as a first approximation)—

δὸς οὖν σωζομένου ῥυθμοῦ ποτε διαθεῖν
ἔμπεδον ἀνόμενων βημάτων ὄρεγμα.

788. By all means retain νομίζετε.

791. I think λύσασθ' should be λύσαιθ', addressed to the gods.

793. For τὸ δὲ καλῶς κτάμενον read τοῦδε καλῶς κταμένου, or τοῖνδε καλῶς κταμένοι, and so end the third strophe.

794. εὖ δὲς ἂν ἰδεῖν is certainly corrupt, especially as ἰδεῖν is in the next line. Σὺ δ' ἀμφιεπεῖν . . . is possible, or σὺ δ' ἄρ' ἀμφιεπεῖν. After λαμπρῶς perhaps δὲς is wanting.

799. For ἐπιφορώτατος read ὁ φωριώτατος.

801. For κρύπτ' ἄσκοπον δ' read κρύφα μὲν, εὔσκοπον δ'.

802. For νύκτα πρό τ' . . . read νύκτωρ προδρυμμάτων.

803. For ἐμφανέστερος read with Schutz ἐμφανέστερον. In place of πολλά δ' ἄλλα φανεί χρήζων, which comes out of place after 800, I think we should have, to close antistrophe 3, πολλά τε δηλα φανεῖ. The superfluous χρήζων rises out of the error that Apollo, not Mercury, is intended.

805. For τότε δὴ read τότε ὥδ' ἄν, κλυτὸν for πλούτον, λῆτρον for λυτήριον, and leave σχέθων in 817 unchanged.

811. Read μεθήσομεν πόλει. τὸ δ' εὐνομον ἐμοὶ κέρδος αὖξεται, for τὸ δ' εὖ ἐμὸν ἐμὸν κέρδος ἀέξεται.

815. περαίνων. Adopt Blomfield's πέραιν' οὐκ.

820. For προπράσσω χάριτος ὄργας λυπρὰς read πρόπραξον χάριν σφαγᾶς λυτῆρος, as at least something possible.

823. φουίαν, read φόνιον.

824. ἐξαπολλὺς μόρου cannot be right. Perhaps ἐξαπολλὺς ἐν μέρει, "in turn, in retaliation."

849. After πολισσονόμους add with Hermann [πλούτόν τε δόμων].

935. For ἔθιγε δὲ μάλα, or δὲ μάχα, we need δὲ ξίφους. The scholiast has ἐφήψατο τοῦ ξίφους.

940—947. This third strophe is terribly corrupt. For τάνπερ I propose τάδ' ἄρα; in εποχθείαξεν I see ἀπαξιῶν, τὰν—ξ being written χσ in very old style. Τὰν is essential with δολίαν. For βλαπτομέναν I propose βλαψίπουν (pede Pæna

Slando); I leave ἐν χρόνους as it is, but for θέσαν ἐποίχεται I conjecture οἷσι μετοίχεται, "fetches in his own times." Then 944, κρατεῖται πως should be κρατεῖ τοι λόγος, or φάτις (see Pers., 724; Suppl., 290; Soph. Aj., 978). For τὸ θεῖον παρὰ τὸ read τὸ, θεῖόν περ ὄντα, and add [Δία] after ὑπουργεῖν. Sense and metre are then perfect, except that we may read μὴ οὐκ for μὴ to remedy hiatus. Δέ after ἄξιον must be retained.

948. The second antistrophe begins μέγαν τ' ἀφηρέθην ψάλιον οἶκων ἄναγε μὲν δόμοις. I propose μέγαν ἀφηρέθην ἄλιον, οἰκίους | ἀναφανέντ' ἐμοῖς: the *Sun* being "prosperity from the prince's face." Next, with Elmsley, χαμαιπετὴς ἔκειτ'. But a line is deficient. Perhaps αἶε | [καλυφθεῖς σκότῳ], which completes sense and metre.

952. For χρόνος ἀμείψεται perhaps χρόνῳ σκέψεται, or χρόνοις σκέψεται. The verb should at least be a Cretic foot.

954. For μῦσος πᾶν ἐλάσῃ I would read μῦσος ἅπαν παραλύσῃ, for metrical reasons, and because of ἁπᾶν ἐλατηριοῖς following.

958. For ἰδεῖν ἀκοῦσαι θρεομένοις, perhaps ἰδεῖν ἀκοῦσαί τ' ἐραμένοισιν.

1058. μόχθοι τάλανές τε Θυέστου is clearly wrong. One cure is to omit τε Θυέστου, regarding Θυέστου to be an interpretation, and τε to have been inserted afterwards for the metre. If Θυέστου must be retained, we need something like πίνακές γε (*I mean, the dishes*) for τάλανές τε; or if τάλανος, like calathus, may mean a dish, τάλανοί γε will be as plausible.

EUMENIDES.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PYTHIAN PROPHETESS.

APOLLO.

ORESTES.

GHOST OF CLYTEMNESTRA.

CHORUS OF FURIES.

ATHENA.

ESCORT.

[The temple of APOLLO at Delphi. In the background the summits of Parnassus. The orchestra represents the open court in front of the temple. The PYTHONESS appears praying at an altar adorned with images of the successive divinities of the sanctuary.]

EUMENIDES.



PYTHONESS.

FIRST, with this prayer, I worship of the gods
Gaia, primeval prophetess;—and next,
Themis, who second, as tradition tells,
Upon her mother's seat was here enthroned ;
With her good will, nor in despite of any,
Another child of Earth, Titanian Phœbe,
Third by decree of Fate, assumed this seat ;
She as a birth-day gift to Phœbus gave it,
And hence his name to Phœbe is allied.
Leaving the lake, and Delos' rocky isle,
At Pallas' ship-frequented shores he lands, 10
Then seeks this region, these Parnassian seats ;
Him onward speed, and mightily adore,
Hephaestus' sons, road-fashioners, who tame
The savage earth. The god, establish'd here,
Highly is honour'd by the native tribe,
And by King Delphos, steersman of this land.
Zeus with prophetic lore his heart inspired,
And throned him on this sacred seat, fourth seer ;
So Loxias now is prophet of his sire.
These gods I worship with preluding prayers. 20
But be Pronæan Pallas likewise hail'd

With words of honour! you too I salute,
 Nymphs who frequent Corycia's cavern'd rock,
 Kindly to birds, and haunt of deities.
 There Bromius, well I wis, the region holds,
 Since with his Thyads thence the god made war,
 And Pentheus curs'd, like doubling hare, to death.
 The founts of Pleistus, and Poseidon's might
 Invoking, and high-consummating Zeus,
 As priestess I assume the sacred seat.
 Beyond the past my entrance may they crown 30
 With fair response! If sons of Greece be here,
 Let them, as custom is, approach by lot,
 For as the god doth guide, I prophesy.

*[She retires into the temple, and after a brief
 pause returns terror-stricken.]*

Things dire to tell, sights dire for eyes to see,
 Have forced me from the fane of Loxias,
 So that no strength I have, no power to move;
 But lacking speed of limb, with hands I run;
 For age, when scared, is naught; a very child.
 Towards the wreath-encircled nook I creep,
 And at earth's navel-stone, behold a man 40
 Defiled before the gods, as suppliant,
 Holding his seat;—his hands still dripping gore,
 His sword new-drawn, his lofty olive-branch
 With ample fillets piously enwreath'd,
 White bands of wool;—for so I speak it plain.
 But lo! before this man, on seats reclined,
 A wondrous company of women sleeps;
 Yet not of women, Gorgons rather say;

Nor yet to Gorgons can I liken them,
 Nor e'en to Harpies, as, by pencil traced,
 I have beheld them oft, on pinions borne,
 Snatching the meal of Phineus. Pinionless 50
 Are these, and black, and loathsome utterly.
 With breathings unapproachable they snore,
 Forth from their eyes drippeth a loathsome rheum;
 Their garb too vile the effigies to touch,
 Of gods immortal, or the roofs of men.
 The tribe this rout which claims I have not seen;
 Nor may a region boast scathless to rear
 Such race, nor afterwards in penance share.
 But for the issue, let lord Loxias,
 Mighty, who rules these seats, himself provide; 60
 For prophet-leech, and portent-seer is he,
 Who every fane can from pollution cleanse.

[*Exit* PYTHONESS.]

[*The interior of the sanctuary is disclosed, and exhibits the following group. APOLLO appears standing beside ORESTES, who is seated on the Omphalos.* The Furies are reclined on seats, fast asleep. HERMES in the background.*]

APOLLO.

Never will I betray thee: to the end
 I guard thee, standing near, or far aloof;
 Nor will be gracious ever to thy foes.
 And captured now this madden'd crew thou seest.
 By sleep the loathsome virgins are o'erpower'd,

* On the hearth [of the Delphian temple] burnt a perpetual fire, and near it was the omphalos, or navel stone, which was supposed to mark the middle point of the earth.—SMITH'S *Classical Geography*.

Hoary primeval progeny, —with whom
 Nor god, nor man, nor beast, will e'er consort. 70
 For Evil's sake brought forth, in evil gloom
 Of subterranean Tartarus they dwell,
 Abhorr'd of men and of the Olympian gods.
 But hie thee hence, nor e'er relax thy speed,
 For as thou tread'st the wand'rer-trampled earth,
 They'll track thee o'er the ample continent,
 O'er the wide ocean and the citted isles;
 And thou, faint not too early, o'er thy grief
 Brooding alone; but haste to Pallas' walls,
 And suppliant, her ancient image clasp. 80
 There judges we shall have to try this cause,
 And soothing words: so means we shall devise
 For evermore to free thee from these toils;
 For at my bidding was thy mother slain.

ORESTES.

Apollo lord, not to do wrong thou know'st;
 Since then thou knowest, learn not to neglect.
 Of good success thy might is warranty.

APOLLO.

Remember, nor let fear unnerve thy mind.

[*To HERMES.*

But thou, true brother mine, blood of my sire,
 Hermes, protect him; —faithful to thy name, 90
 Escorter, —shepherd thou my suppliant;
 For Zeus himself reveres the outlaw's claim,
 Which mortals from thy happy escort hold.

[*Exit ORESTES, conducted by HERMES.*

[*Ghost of CLYTEMNESTRA appears behind APOLLO. She is arrayed in her robe of state, sombre and shadow-like. Her breast is bare, and the bloody wound visible near the neck.*]

Ghost.

Sleep would ye ! How ! what need of sleepers here ?
The while by you dishonour'd and contemn'd,
Among the other dead no lack of scorn,
For his sake whom I slew, I must endure.
In deep disgrace I wander ;—hear ye this,
Reproach among the shades forsakes me not ;
Dire murder I have borne from those most dear, 100
Yet in my cause, no god is moved to wrath,
Though ruthless slain by matricidal hands.
Behold these direful heart-wounds, whence they came,
For clear in sleep the vision of the mind,
Though unforeseen by day the fate of men.
My off'rings many a time have ye lapp'd up,
Wineless libations, sober, soothing gifts,
The hallow'd feast around the altar-fire,
At night's dread hour, shared by no other god,
All these down-trampled now I must behold. 110
But gone is he, escaping like a fawn,
And, lightly bounding o'er the hunter's net,
At you he mock'd, with many a scornful jeer.
Hear ye, how, pleading for my life, I speak.
Awake, dread demons of the lower world ;
For Clytemnestra calls you, I, a dream.

Chorus.

[*Moaning.*]

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Moan would ye? but the man is gone, is flown;
For him are patron-gods, though not for me.

Chorus.

[Moaning.]

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Soundly ye sleep, and pity not my woe,
While he, the matricide, Orestes, flies. 120

Chorus.

[Groans.]

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Groan ye and sleep, nor on the instant rise?
What have ye done except to work me bale?

Chorus.

[Groans.]

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Slumber and toil, worthy conspirators,
Have sorely wasted the fell dragon's might.

Chorus.

[Redoubled and shrill groans.]

*Chorus-leader.** Take heed there.

<i>Furies.</i>	2.	3.	-	-	-	Seize.
	4.	5.	-	-	-	Seize.
	6.	7.	-	-	-	- Seize.
	8.	9.	-	-	-	- Seize.
	10.	11.	-	-	-	- - Seize.
	12.	13.	-	-	-	- - Seize.
	14.	15.	-	-	-	- - Seize.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

In dreams ye track the game, ye yelp amain,
 Like hound that never intermits the chase.
 What do ye? Rise, be not subdued by toil,
 Nor yet, relax'd by sleep, to grief be blind.
 Let these my just reproaches prick your heart, 130
 For, to the prudent, censures are as goads—
 †Vomit your gory vapour 'gainst this man,
 With second runnings chase him to the death,
 And blast him with your vitals' fiery breath.

[*The Ghost vanishes. The Chorus-leader starts from
 her seat.*]

Leader.

Awake! Awaken her, as I wake thee!
 Sleepest thou still? Arise, and slumber spurn;
 Then try we whether vain our prelude be.

* Müller, p. 61. These exclamations are uttered by the leader and the other Furies in rapid succession.

[*The Furies start up one after another from their seats, and range themselves upon the stage, right and left of their leader.*]

Chorus.

STRO. α'.

1st *Fury.* Woe! woe! alack! Friends, we have suffer'd
scorn.

2. Much have I suffer'd and in vain.

1. Alack! dire anguish we have borne, 140
Intolerable pain!

2. Burst from the toils, fled is the game away.

3. By sleep o'ermaster'd, I have lost the prey.

ANT. α'.

4. Fie! Son of Zeus! Thou thievish art, I
trow;

5. Us, hoary gods, thou youngster ridest down;

4. This godless wight, bitter to parents, thou
As suppliant dost own.

5. A god the matricide has filch'd away.

6. That aught herein is just will any say?

STRO. β'.

7 To me in dreams have come reproaches keen, 15
And like a charioteer with scourge grasp'd
tight,

My heart and reins full ruthlessly they smite.

8. Such chilly pang I know

†As when the public scourger deals the blow.

ANT. β .

9. The doings these of upstart gods, I ween,
Usurping power beyond the sway of right.
†Dark gouts of blood, from foot to crown,
dread sight,—
10. Earth's sacred navel-stone 160
Blood's horrible defilement now doth own.

STRO. γ .

- 11, 12. But thou, the seer, self-bidden, all unsought,
With household murder hast defiled thy
shrine;
Revering mortal things 'gainst law divine,
The Fates primeval thou hast set at nought.

ANT. γ .

- 13, 14. †Me thou dost grieve nor him shalt disenthral ;
But under earth never shall he be free ;
For blood-polluted, though he 'scape from me,
†A new avenger on his head shall fall.

APOLLO.

Avaunt, I charge thee, leave these hallow'd seats ; 170
Depart with speed from this prophetic shrine,
Lest thou,—by wingèd, glistening, snake transfix'd,
Shot from this golden-twisted cord,—through pain,
Shouldst vomit forth black gore, the clots disgorging
Which thou from slaughter'd men hast ruthless suck'd.
Thee it befits not to approach these seats,
But where head-logging, eye-out-scooping rage,

With vengeance that doth sap youth's vital powers,
Where slaughters, mutilations, stonings reign, 180
And where impaled, wretches with cruel throes
Groan forth their anguish. These the feasts ye love,
And therefore are ye hateful to the gods.
Your loathly shapes attest it,—such should dwell
In blood-gorged lion's den, not tarry here
Bringing pollution to these hallow'd seats.
Begone, ye grisly troop, unshepherded,
To such a flock no heavenly power is kind.

Chorus.

Apollo, lord, do thou in turn give ear ;
No mere accomplice art thou in these ills ; 190
Rather of all, sole author thou, sole cause.

APOLLO.

How so ! To greater length extend thy speech.

Chorus.

The stranger thou didst prompt to matricide.

APOLLO.

To 'venge his sire I prompted him ; why not ?

Chorus.

With promise this new bloodshed to defend.

APOLLO.

And bade him seek as suppliant this shrine.

Chorus.

Then these, his escort, why dost thou revile ?

APOLLO.

Because not meet their presence for these seats.

Chorus.

Yet unto us hath been assign'd this charge.

APOLLO.

What function this? Extol thy fair employ. 200

Chorus.

All mother-slayers from their homes we chase.

APOLLO.

How if the wife her husband should have slain?

Chorus.

Not then by kindred murder were she stain'd.

APOLLO.

Greatly thou dost misprise and set at nought

The nuptial bond of Hera and of Zeus,

Dishonour'd too is Cypris by these words,

From whom to mortals come their dearest joys;

For, under Justice' shield, the nuptial couch,

'Twixt man and wife the heaven-appointed bond,

Is mightier than oath; to wedded pair,

If lenient thou, not viewing them with wrath, 210

Should one of them the other reave of life,

Not justly then Orestes thou dost chase;

For thee, right earnest in his case I find,

But openly in hers more mild in sooth.

But Pallas shall both sides with justice scan.

Chorus.

Trust me this man never will I let go.

APOLLO.

Pursue him then, prolong thy fruitless toil.

Chorus.

Claim not by word my honours to abridge.

APOLLO.

Honours like thine I would reject with scorn.

Chorus.

For great thy rank before the throne of Zeus. 220

But I, led on by matricidal blood,

To death will chase this man, and hunt him down.

*[Exit Chorus.]**APOLLO.*

But I will aid, will save, the fugitive ;

For dire with men and gods the suppliant's wrath,

If I his cause should willingly betray.

[The scene changes to ATHENS, and the temple of APOLLO is transformed into the temple of MINERVA POLIAS on the Acropolis.]

ORESTES, embracing the sacred image of PALLAS.

Athena, queen, at Loxias' behest

I hither come ; view kindly one accused,

Not blood-polluted, nor with hands unclean,

For blunted now and worn the edge of crime

At other shrines, and in the paths of men.

Passing alike o'er continents and seas,
Obedient to the word oracular
Of Loxias, thy sacred shrine I reach,
Thy image goddess ; taking here my stand,
I will abide the issue of my cause.

[*Enter the Leader of the Chorus, followed by the Furies. As they advance they spread themselves out towards both sides of the orchestra.*]

Leader.

'Tis well ; sure token this, the man is here.
Follow the leading of this voiceless guide ;
For still we track, as hound the wounded fawn,
By blood and reeking drops, our destined prey ;
With many a toilsome, man-outwearing gasp
Pant my deep vitals, for on every spot
Of the wide earth my charge I shepherded, 240
And now, in hot pursuit, with wingless flight,
Swift as swift galley o'er the sea I course ;
Here in some nook ensconced the game must lie ;
With keenest joy I snuff the scent of blood.

[*The Furies having taken their stations opposite to one another in the orchestra, sing the following Strophes in responsive order.*]

Chorus.

1, 2. Look here ! Look there !
 Take heed ! Beware !
Lest, scathless in flight, illuding our sight,
 The matricide 'scape unaware.

3, 4. Lo! yonder enshrined,
 Round the goddess entwined,
 A verdict he seeks through her aid 'gainst the right. 250

5, 6. But baseless his trust;
 Mother's blood from the dust
 Is hard to recover, as earth-fallen rain.
 7, 8. Lo, suffer he must
 In requital most just,
 And I from thy members the life-blood will drain.
 9, 10. The red draught I'll taste,
 Thy strength I will waste,
 Then drag thee still living to regions below,
 The forfeit to pay for thy mother's death-blow.

11, 12. There thou shalt see in durance drear,
 'Gainst god, or guest, or parents dear, 260
 Like thee who sinn'd, receiving their due meed.
 13, 14. For Hades, ruler of the nether sphere,
 Exactest auditor of human kind,
 Graved on the tablet of his mind
 Doth every trespass read.

ORESTES.

To me, long disciplined in woe, are known
 Divers lustrations; when to speak I know,
 When to be silent; but in present need
 By sapient teacher I was charged to speak.
 Pale now, and dim, the blood-mark on my hand; 270

Wash'd clean away the matricidal stain ;
For while yet fresh, by rites of sacred swine,
At Phœbus' altar it was duly purged ;—
Tedious the tale, were I to reckon o'er
How many fared with me nor suffer'd harm.
Time, as it waxeth, purifieth all ;—
Now, with pure lip, I piously invoke
Athena of this region queen, to come,
My pleader, so she, without martial spear,
Myself shall win, my realm, and Argos' sons, 280
Honestly true, allies for evermore.
But whether on the distant Lybian plain
She, by her native lake of Triton stand,
Or sit, with foot enveloped, to her friends
Dispensing aid ;—or on Phlegraian fields,
Like warlike leader, marshall her array,—
Oh may she come (a goddess hears from far),
And be my saviour from these miseries.

Chorus.

Thee nor Apollo, nor Athena's might
Avails to save, spurn'd by the gods themselves, 290
With heart of joy oblivious, thou shalt pine,
The Furies' blood-suck'd victim, a mere shade.—
How! no reply! Dost thou contemn my words?
Thou, fatten'd for me, thou, my victim doom'd,
Slain at no altar, but my living prey ;—
The Furies' binding hymn thou now shalt hear.

[*The Chorus-leader ascends the steps of the altar. The rest of the Chorus arrange themselves in the orchestra, and sing the following Strophes*]:—

Choral Hymn.

Haste we now the dance to wind,
 Since beseems in dread refrain,
 To utter how our bodeful train 300
 Deal the lots to mortal kind.
 Loyal are we to the Right,—
 Hence clean hands whoso extendeth,
 Scathless still through life he wendeth,
 Nor on him our wrath may light.
 But who guilty hands doth hide,
 Stain'd with blood,—as yonder wight,—
 Lurketh ever at his side,
 Witness true, this Brood of Night.
 Blood-avengers we appear,
 Stern-purposed to achieve our doom severe. 310

Full Chorus.

STRO. a'.

Oh mother, hear me, Mother Night,
 Who brought me forth, a living dread,
 To scare the living and the dead,
 Latona's son does me despite;—
 Stealing away my trembling prey,
 Destined a mother's murder to requite.
 Now o'er the victim lift the dread refrain,
 The Furies' death-hymn, madness-fraught;—
 Torch of the brain, from Hades brought,—
 Soul-binding, lyreless, mortal-blighting strain.

ANT. α'. •

For Fate supreme ordains that we 320

This office hold for evermore :—

Mortals imbrued with kindred gore

We scathe, till under earth they flee ;

And when in death

They yield their breath,

In Hades still our thralls they be.

Now o'er the victim lift the dread refrain,

The Furies' death-hymn, madness-fraught ;—

Torch of the brain, from Hades brought,—

Soul-binding, lyreless, mortal-blighting strain.

STRO. β'.

For even at birth Fate assign'd our career 330

Apart from the gods ;—we approach not their sphere ;

Their banquets we share not,

Their white robes we wear not,

Men's homes to destroy is the Furies' employ ;

When Ares in strife

Robs a brother of life,

†Ruthless, the blood-dripping caitiff we chase ;—

Though girded with strength, he falters at length

And falls, overpower'd in the race.

ANT. β'.

No partner brook we in our time-honour'd cares, 340

†Nor share with the gods jurisdiction nor prayers.

For, us,—the detested,—

Blood-stain'd, sable-vested,

High Zeus from his hall did exclude one and all.
 So downward we stoop
 On our foe with fell swoop,
 And crush him with heavy foot-fall where he lies;
 †With these limbs we o'erthrow both the swift and
 the slow;
 Once prostrate, our victims ne'er rise. 350

STRO. γ'.

Man's lofty pride that soars to greet
 The empyrean, to the ground
 Dwindles dishonour'd at the sound
 Of our dark-stoled approach, when fleet
 Our bodeful dance we weave with whirling feet.

ANT. γ'.

Through evil blind, the wretch, though prone,
 Knows not his fall; for dark the cloud
 That doth the guilty mind o'ershroud;
 And Fame proclaims with heavy groan,
 The curse, dark-brooding, o'er a house o'erthrown.

STRO. δ'.

For such Fate's decree:—dread ministers we,— 360
 Keen-eyed to conceive what untired we achieve;
 †Of crime ever mindful, obdurate to prayer,
 Apart from the gods our loath'd mission we bear;—
 To living and to dead, 'neath our sunless torch-ray,
 Dark and rugged our way.

ANT. 8.

Who then without fear among mortals can hear
Our Fate-sanctioned warrant, our god-given right ? 370
For not with dishonour I wield my dread might,
Although my hoar mission, in darkness profound,
I hold 'neath the ground.

[ATHENA appears in a chariot and alights.]

ATHENA.

A voice I heard from far Scamander's banks
Invoking me, what time the land I claim'd,—
Fair portion of the booty, spear-achieved,
Which chiefs and leaders of Achaia's host
Apportion'd, root and branch, for ever mine, 380
To Theseus' sons a chosen heritage.
Thence have I come, plying unwearied feet,
My swelling Ægis rustling, without wings ;
To stalwart coursers having yoked this car.
And now, beholding here these uncouth guests,
I fear not, yet the marvel takes mine eye.
Who are ye ? I address myself to all,
To you and also to this stranger here,
Who as a suppliant at mine image sits.
But you, not mortal are ye in your mien,
Nor like to goddesses of gods beheld,
Nor look ye like the habitants of earth ;— 390
But to speak ill of those who harm us not
Reason forbids, and Justice stands aloof.

Chorus.

Daughter of Zeus, all shalt thou hear in brief.
The progeny of ancient Night are we,
Curses yclept in mansions 'neath the earth.

ATHENA.

Known are to me your race, and your dread name.

Chorus.

Mine honourable office thou shalt hear.

ATHENA.

Mine ears are open, be the word but plain.

Chorus.

'Tis ours men-slayers from their homes to chase.

ATHENA.

And to the slayer's flight what goal is fix'd ? 400

Chorus.

Where to rejoice is not th' appointed doom.

ATHENA.

And to this bourn thou houndest now this man ?

Chorus.

Ay, for to matricide he bent his soul.

ATHENA.

Urged by no mandate whose strong dread he fear'd ?

Chorus.

Where is the goad should prompt to matricide ?

ATHENA.

Two parties plead, one only have I heard.

Chorus.

But neither will he take nor tender oath.

ATHENA.

Just seeming, not just action is thine aim.

Chorus.

How ? Tell me. For no lack of wit is thine.

ATHENA.

Win not by oaths unjust success, I say. 410

Chorus.

Question then put, and rightful verdict give.

ATHENA.

Leave ye to me the issue ?

Chorus.

Wherefore not ?

Of worthy father worthy scion, thee
We honour.

ATHENA.

What wilt answer in thy turn,
O stranger ? Tell thy country and thy race,
And thy misfortunes, then ward off this blame ;
If, trusting in the right, thou thus dost sit
Clasping mine image, near my sacred shrine,
Ixion-like, a suppliant revered,
To all of these make answer clear to me. 420

ORESTES.

Athena, queen ! matter of grave import
First will I from thy words last-utter'd purge.
Not blood-polluted am I, nor doth stain
Cleave to thine image from thy suppliant's hand.
Sure proof of this I will adduce ;—'tis law
That voiceless lives the man defiled by blood,
Till purifier's hand hath him besprent
With victim's blood, slain in life's budding prime.
Long since at other shrines have been perform'd,
With victims and with streams, these lustral rites. 430
Thus then this care, as cancell'd, I dismiss.
My lineage, what it is, thou soon shalt hear.
Argive am I, my sire thou knewest well,
Marshal of naval heroes, Agamemnon,
In league with whom thou madest Ilion,
Troya's proud city, an uncitied waste.
The hero home return'd, and basely fell ;
For him, entangled in a subtle net,
My mother, black of soul, did reave of life ;
The bath bore witness to the deed of blood.
Myself, long time an exile, coming home, 440
Slew her who bare me,—I deny it not,—
Avenging my dear father, blood for blood.—
But Loxias is sharer in my guilt
Who goads of anguish to my heart announced,
Unless the guilty found from me their due.
My deed, or just, or unjust, do thou judge ;—
Whate'er thy verdict, I shall be content.

ATHENA.

Too grave the cause for mortal to adjudge,
Nor is it lawful for myself to try
Causes of blood, with such keen issue fraught. 450
Although, due rites perform'd, harmless and pure,
Thou visitest my shrine,—a suppliant,—
Yet bring not thou upon my city blame.
For these hold functions hard to set aside,
And not triumphant in their suit, henceforth,
The poison of their hate, falling to earth,
Will to this land breed dire and cureless plague.—
So stands the matter ;—each alternative,
For them to stay, for me to banish them,
Is mischief-fraught, nor know I remedy.
But since this weighty cause hath lighted here, 460
Judges of murder, bound by oath, I'll choose
Solemn tribunal for all future time.
But for yourselves call witnesses and proofs,—
Sworn evidence collect to aid your suit ;
Myself the noblest of my citizens,
To whom is dear the sanctity of oaths,
Will cull ; then hither come to judge this cause.

[*Exit.**Chorus.*

ST. α'.

Ruin will usher in new laws
Should judgment crown the wrongful cause,
And on this mother-slayer smile ;— 470
This deed will mortals reconcile
To license, and from age to age,
Parents shall bleed beneath their children's rage.

ANT. α'.

No more this mortal-watching train
 Shall dog the caitiff as of yore ;—
 To murder I will give the rein ;
 Who tells his neighbour's sorrow o'er, 480
 †Shall hear in turn Grief's anguish'd moan ;
 Who comforts other's woe himself must groan.

STRO. β'.

Let none, 'neath Sorrow's stroke
 Writhing, our aid invoke
 Pleading, with anguish'd moan,
 " O Justice, O Erinyes' throne !"
 Some father thus may cry,
 Some mother smit with agony,
 Vainly, since Justice' altar lieth prone. 490

ANT. β'.

†Throned in the heart let Awe,
 Guardian of sacred law,
 There hold her stedfast reign !
 Well earn'd is wisdom at the cost of pain.—
 But who in blithesome cheer
 That lives, absolved from Fear,
 Or man, or state, will Justice long revere ?

STRO. γ'.

Neither life by law unblest, 500
 Nor by tyrant yoke oppress'd,

Sanction thou ;—
All extremes the gods detest ;
They with strength the mean endow.
Truth in pithy phrase comprest
Hearken ;—pride and haughty wreak
From irreverence begin ;—
But if soundness reign within,
There, dear to all, dwells Bliss, which mortals seek.

ANT. γ'.

This, the sum of wisdom, hear ;—
Justice' altar aye revere,
Nor ever dare,
Lusting after worldly gear,
With atheist foot to spurn ; beware,
Lurketh Retribution near,
Direful issue doth impend ;
Honour then with holy fear
Thy parents,—household rights revere,
Nor guest-observing ordinance offend.

510

STRO. δ'.

But who unforced, with spirit free
Dares to be just, is ne'er unblest ;
Whelm'd utterly he cannot be :
But for the wretch with lawless breast,
Bold seizer of promiscuous prey,—
I warn you,—he, perforce, his sail
Shall strike amid the conquering gale,
When shrouds and yards dismasted own its sway.

520

ANT. 8.

He cries, but mid the whirlpool's roar
 None heeds him ; for the gods deride
 †Eyeing the boaster, proud no more, 530
 Struggling amid the surging tide ;
 Shorn of his strength he yields to Fate ;—
 The cape he weathers not, but thrown
 On Justice' reef, with precious freight,
 He perisheth for aye, unwept, unknown.

*[Athena enters at the head of the twelve Areopagites, who take
 their seats in the orchestra.]*

ATHENA.

Herald, proclaim ! Hold back the multitude,
 Let Tuscan trumpet, fill'd with mortal breath,
 Piercing the welkin with sonorous blast,
 Ring out its brazen summons to the crowd :
 For, this tribunal seated, it befits 540
 Silence should reign ; so this assembled town
 Shall learn the laws I sanction for all time,
 So may this stranger's cause be fairly judged.

[Apollo appears on the stage.]

Chorus.

Apollo, lord, rule thou thine own domain ;—
 In this affair what title hast thou, speak.

APOLLO.

As witness have I come, (for know, this man
 To me is suppliant, guest of my hearth,

Moreover from this murder him I cleansed,)
And stand beside him pleader in his cause,
For of his mother's death-blow mine the blame. 550

[*To Athena.*

Now, as thou knowest, open thou the cause.

ATHENA.

[*To the Chorus.*

'Tis yours to speak;—thus I commence the suit.
Since that the plaintiff, taking first the word,
To state the argument may justly claim.

Chorus.

Though we be many, brief shall be our speech.

[*To Orestes.*

Do thou in turn make answer, word for word :—
And first declare,—didst thou thy mother slay ?

ORESTES.

I slew her, nor have e'er denied the deed.

Chorus.

Thus in our wrestling-match one round is ours.

ORESTES.

Not prostrate he o'er whom thou mak'st this vaunt. 560.

Chorus.

Behoveth thee to tell how thou didst slay.

ORESTES.

This hand, my drawn sword wielding, smote her neck.

Chorus.

At whose persuasion? Who advised the deed?

ORESTES.

His sacred word,—for so he witnesseth.

Chorus.

How? did the prophet counsel matricide?

ORESTES.

Certes,—nor thus far have I blamed my lot.

Chorus.

But, by the vote condemn'd, thou'lt change thy speech.

ORESTES.

I fear not;—from the tomb my sire will aid.

Chorus.

After such murder on the dead rely.

ORESTES.

Polluted was she with a twofold stain.

570

Chorus.

How so? Instruct the jury of these things.

ORESTES.

Her husband slaying, she my father slew.

Chorus.

Thou livest,—she through death is murder-free.

ORESTES.

Why did ye not then chase her while alive?

Chorus.

Not of one blood with her the man she slew.

ORESTES.

But am I with my mother one in blood ?

Chorus.

Thee 'neath her zone she nourish'd ;—blood-stain'd
wretch,

A mother's dearest blood dost thou disown ?

ORESTES.

Now bear me witness and expound for me,
Apollo, whether I with justice slew. 580
The deed, as wrought, we do not disavow ;—
But whether justly shed, or not, this blood,
Judge thou, that answer I may make to these.

APOLLO.

To you, Athena's great tribunal, now
Justly I'll speak ; a prophet may not lie ;—
Nought from my throne prophetic have I said
Concerning man, or woman, or the state,
That Zeus, Olympian sire, hath not ordain'd.
Learn ye how potent is the plea I urge ;—
The Father's will I charge you to obey ; 590
For oaths are not of greater force than Zeus.

Chorus.

Zeus, as thou sayest, gave this oracle,
And bade Orestes here, his father's death
Avenging, to despise a mother's rights.

APOLLO.

Unlike the case, when dies a highborn man,
 Richly adorn'd by sceptres Heav'n bestow'd,
 By woman dies, not from impetuous bow
 Of Amazons far-shooting: Pallas, nay!
 But as thyself shalt hear, and these convened
 Who sit, by ballot to adjudge this cause. 600
 For, from the mighty labour, conquest-crown'd,
 †Her lord with friendly praises she receives,
 The bath he enters; him she covers o'er
 With broider'd robes, then, tangled in the folds,
 Smites him, her husband;—such the hero's death,
 By all revered, marshal of naval hosts;—
 Such too the woman, her I thus describe,
 Their hearts to prick who sit as judges here.

Chorus.

A father's death Zeus honours,—so thou sayest,— 610
 Yet he his father, aged Cronus, chain'd;—
 How prove this deed not adverse to thy word?
 Here I invoke you, judges, give good heed.

APOLLO.

Oh hateful progeny, of Heav'n abhorr'd!
 Fetters he might unloose,—this ill hath cure,
 And yields to many a method of release.
 But when of murder'd man the dust hath once
 The blood suck'd up, he riseth never more.
 No charm hath Zeus, my father here ordain'd,
 Who all things else upturneth as he will, 620
 Nor with the toil panteth his mighty heart.

Chorus.

Against his exile darest thou to plead?
Shall he, a mother's kindred blood who shed,
Lord it in Argos, o'er his father's house?
What altars of his people may he touch?
How share the lustral water with his tribe? //

APOLLO.

Thus I declare, learn ye how just my words.
Not parent of the embryo, but nurse,
Is she, the so-call'd mother of the child.
The father is the source, as stranger, she 630
For stranger rears the germ, if Heaven blight not.
Sure warrant of my word I will adduce;—
A child, though motherless, may see the light;
Witness this daughter of Olympian Zeus,
Not nurtured in the darkness of the womb,
Yet such a scion goddess never bare. //
In will, in action, Pallas, be it mine
Thy city and thy people to exalt.
This man I sent, a suppliant to thy shrine,
That faithful he might be for evermore. 640
Both him and his descendants mayst thou win,
Thine ally goddess,—may this pact endure,
And be in honour held by men unborn.

ATHENA.

I do command you, as your judgment leads,
Just verdict give,—of pleadings now enough.

Chorus.

By us in sooth our shafts have all been shot,
The issue of the cause I wait to hear.

ATHENA.

What judgment can I give, unblamed by you ?

Chorus.

Ye heard what ye have heard ;— now with your heart
Give judgment, strangers, and revere your oaths. 650

ATHENA.

Hear ye my statute, men of Attica,—
Ye who of bloodshed judge this primal cause ;
Nay, and in future aye shall Ægeus' host
Revere this great tribunal. This the hill
Of Ares, seat of Amazons, their tent,
What time 'gainst Theseus, breathing hate, they came,
Waging fierce battle, and their towers uprear'd,
A counter-fortress to Acropolis ;—
To Ares they did sacrifice, and hence
This rock is titled Areopagus.
Here then shall sacred Awe, to Fear allied, 660
By day and night my lieges hold from wrong,
Save if themselves do innovate my laws.
If thou with mud, or influx base, bedim
The sparkling water, nought thou'lt find to drink.
Nor Anarchy, nor Tyrant's lawless rule
Commend I to my people's reverence ;—
Nor let them banish from their city Fear ;

For who 'mong men, uncurb'd by fear, is just ?
Thus holding Awe in seemly reverence, 670
A bulwark for your state shall ye possess,
A safeguard to protect your city-walls,
Such as no mortals other-where can boast,
Neither in Scythia, nor in Pelop's realm.
Behold ! This court august, untouch'd by bribes,
Sharp to avenge, wakeful for those who sleep,
Establish I, a bulwark to this land.
These warnings to my lieges I address,
To unborn ages reaching. Judges, rise,
Assume the pebbles, and decide the cause,
Your oath revering. All hath now been said. 680

[*The first Areopagite rises, takes a pebble from the altar, and drops it into the urn. The rest follow in succession between the following distichs.*]

Chorus.

This sisterhood, oppressive to the land,
My counsel is that ye in no wise shame.

APOLLO.

And I enjoin you, fear mine oracles ;
From Zeus they issue, fruitless make them not.

Chorus.

Usurping championship of bloody suit,
No longer shall thine oracles be pure.

APOLLO.

Did then my Father towards Ixion err,
Who first, as blood-stain'd suppliant, sued for aid ?

Chorus.

Say on ! but I, defrauded in my suit,
In turn will haunt the land, dread visitant. 690

APOLLO.

Alike of younger and more ancient gods
Art thou unhonour'd. I the cause shall win.

Chorus.

So whilom wroughtest thou in Pheres' house,
Moving the Fates mortals from death to free.

APOLLO.

Is it not just my votary to save,
Then most, when most his trouble calls for aid ?

Chorus.

But thou the prime allotments didst o'errule
With wine deluding the hoar goddesses.

APOLLO.

But thou, full soon, defeated in thy suit,
Wilt spew thy venom, harmless to thy foes. 700

Chorus.

Since thou, young god, o'erridest my hoar age,
The issue I await with list'ning ear,
And doubtful stay my wrath against the town.

[*After the twelfth Areopagite has dropped his pebble into the urn, ATHENA takes one from the altar, and holds it in her hand.*]

ATHENA.

With me it rests to give the casting vote,
And to Orestes I my suffrage pledge.
For to no mother do I owe my birth;
But I, in all save wedlock, praise the male.
In very truth I am my father's child,
Nor care I to avenge a woman's death
Who slew her husband, guardian of the house. 710
Orestes, judged by equal votes prevails,*
The pebbles now pour quickly from the urns,
Judges, to whom this office is assign'd.

ORESTES.

Phœbus Apollo, how will end this suit?

Chorus.

O Night, my mother, seest thou these things?

ORESTES.

The noose awaits me, or to see the light.

Chorus.

Ruin for us, or firm prerogative.

[*The pebbles are poured out of the urn and counted.*]

* Athena's ballot is the mythic expression of the principle that where justice is undecided mercy prevails.—*Müller.*

APOLLO.

Now strangers, count the pebbles with due care;
And while ye tell them o'er, let justice reign;
From lack of faithful heart is mighty woe; 720
One vote may overwhelm or save a house.

ATHENA.

Orestes has escaped the doom of blood,
For equal are the numbers of the votes.

ORESTES.

Hail Pallas! Hail thou saviour of our house!
The exile, reft of his paternal land,
Thou ledest home: haply some Greek will say,
"Argive once more, he treads his father's halls,
Through Pallas' aid restored, and Loxias,
And His, third saviour, consummating Zeus,
Who, honouring my father's death, saves me, 730
Although these Furies he beholds who plead
My mother's cause! Now homeward I depart,
Pledg'd to thy country and thy lieges here
By oath, to be revered for evermore,
That never helmsman of the Argive State,
Shall hither bear the well-appointed spear."
For we, ourselves, though couching in the grave,
On those who violate these present oaths
By sore perplexities will work, and send
Distressful marches, and, with omens dire, 740
Crossings of streams, till they repent their toil.
But unto those who keep this pledge, and honour

Athena's city with confederate spear,
To them will we be gracious evermore.
Hail goddess, and these city-wardens, hail!
Still may your gripe be fatal to your foes,
While victory and safety crown your spear.

[*Exit.*

Chorus.

1. Ye upstart gods, time-honour'd laws
Down-riding, ye have seized my prey.
2. But I, dishonour'd, stung by grief, 750
Woe, woe, my torture to allay,
On all the ground, will cast around
Venom, whose baleful drops shall cause
Where it doth light a sterile blight,
Fatal alike to germ, to leaf.
The pest, O Justice, scouring o'er the plain,
Shall fling abroad its man-destroying stain.
3. I groan anew; what dare? what do?
My pangs the citizens shall rue;
Alas, most wretched are thy daughters, Night!
Enduring this dishonourable slight. 760

. ATHENA.

Be moved by me to stay these heavy groans;
Not vanquish'd are ye, nor to your disgrace,
Fell justice, equal-voted, from the urn.
Besides from Zeus clear oracles were sent,
And he who utter'd them himself avouch'd,
Orestes for this deed should know no scath.

Hurl not your heavy wrath upon this land ;
 Your rage abate, cause not sterility,
 Nor rain your poison-drops, like venom'd darts,
 Ruthless devourers of each tender germ. 770
 For I most righteously do promise you
 Both sanctuaries and shrines in this just land ;
 Seated at hearths with unctuous off'rings fed,
 And held in honour by my lieges here.

Chorus.

1. Ye upstart gods, time-honour'd laws
 Down-riding, ye have seized my prey,
2. But I, dishonour'd, stung by grief,
 Woe, woe, my torture to allay,
 On all the ground, will cast around
 Venom, whose baleful drops shall cause 780
 Where it doth light a sterile blight,
 Fatal alike to germ, to leaf.
 The pest, O Justice, scouring o'er the plain,
 Shall fling abroad its man-destroying stain.
3. I groan anew ; what dare ? what do ?
 My pangs the citizens shall rue ;
 Alas, most wretched are thy daughters, Night !
 Enduring this dishonourable slight.

ATHENA.

Not slighted are ye, powers august ! through rage
 Curse not with hopeless blight the abode of man.
 I too have power from Zeus ; why speak of that ? 790
 And sole among the gods I know the key

That opes the halls where sealèd thunder sleeps.
But such we need not. Be appeased by me,
Nor scatter o'er the land, from froward tongue,
The harmful seed that turneth all to bane.
Of bitter rage lull ye the murky wave,
And worshipp'd be with me, co-dwellers here.
Sharing the first fruit of this ample realm,
For children offer'd, and for nuptial rite,
This word of mine thou wilt for ever praise. 800

Chorus.

1. What! I endure all this ; alas !
2. I, hoary goddess, dwell forsooth on earth,
Debasement horrible !
3. Revenge I breathe, unmitigated wrath !
4. Woe, woe ! O earth, alas !
5. What agony of pain creeps o'er my heart !
6. Hear, Mother Night, my passion. Mark for scorn,
7. By crafty gods deluded, held for nought,
Of ancient honour I am basely shorn.

ATHENA.

I'll bear thine anger, for mine elder thou, 810
And art moreover far more sage than I.
Yet me, with wisdom, Zeus not meanly dowers.
But ye, departing to a foreign land,
Will of the land ye leave enamour'd be ;
Of this I warn you ; for, Time's onward flow
Shall these my lieges lift to loftier fame.
But thou a seat shalt have, Erechtheus near,

Honour'd by men, and stolèd matrons, such
 As ye from other mortals ne'er might win.
 But cast ye not abroad on these my realms, 820
 To waste their budding strength, whetstones of blood,
 Evoking frantic rage, not born of wine;
 Nor pluck ye out the heart of fighting cocks,
 To plant among my people civil strife,
 Reckless of kindred blood; let foreign war
 Rage without stint, affording ample scope
 For him who burns with glory's mighty rage.
 No war of home-bred cocks, I ween, is that!
 Such terms I proffer, thine it is to choose;
 Blessing and blest, with blessed rites revered, 830
 To share this country dear unto the gods.

Chorus.

1. What! I endure all this; alas!
2. I, hoary goddess, dwell forsooth on earth,
 Debasement horrible!
3. Revenge I breathe, unmitigated wrath!
4. Woe, woe! O earth, alas!
5. What agony of pain creeps o'er my heart!
6. Hear, Mother Night, my passion. Mark for scorn,
7. By crafty gods deluded, held for nought,
 Of ancient honour I am basely shorn. 840

ATHENA.

I will not weary to entreat thee fair;
 For ne'er with justice shalt thou urge the plaint,
 That thou, the elder deity, by me

The younger, and these city-guarding men,
Wast, like an outcast, banish'd from this land.
But if persuasion, dropping from my tongue
Gentle and sweet, seem to thee pure and dread,
Needs wilt thou here abide ; yet, if thou go,
Not justly wouldst thou on this city hurl
Revenge, or wrath, or do my people wrong ;
For thine it is to share with me this land, 850
In aye-enduring honour justly held.

Chorus.

Athena, queen, what seat dost offer me ?

ATHENA.

One where no sorrow scathes. Receive it thou !

Chorus.

If I consent, what honour waiteth me ?

ATHENA.

No house unblest by thee shall henceforth thrive.

Chorus.

This wilt thou do ? endow me with such might ?

ATHENA.

Ay and will prosper him who worships thee.

Chorus.

Wilt thou sure warrant give me for all time ?

ATHENA.

I may not pledge what I will not perform.

Chorus.

Thine utt'rance soothes me ;—I relax my wrath. 860

ATHENA.

Establish'd here thou wilt be rich in friends.

Chorus.

What blessings shall we hymn for this thy land ?

ATHENA.

Such as, with gracious influence, from earth,
 From dew of ocean, and from heaven, attend
 On conquest not ignoble. That soft gales,
 With sunshine blowing, wander o'er the land ;
 That earth's fair fruit, rich increase of the flocks
 Fail not my citizens for evermore,
 With safety of the precious human seed ;—
 But, for the impious,—weed them promptly out, 870
 For I, like one who tendeth plants, do love
 This race of righteous men, by grief unscathed :—
 Such be thy charge. Be mine not to endure
 That, among mortals, in war's mighty game,
 Athena's city be not conquest-crown'd.

Chorus.

ST. 2.

Pallas, thy chosen seat be henceforth mine !

No more the city I despise

Which Zeus omnipotent and Ares prize,

Altar of refuge, glorious shrine,

Strong hold of Grecian deities, 880

For which, propitious, now I pray,

Pouring my sacred lay ;

Springing to light from earth's dark womb,

May life's fair germs prolific bloom,

Lured by the solar ray.

ATHENA.

I for my citizens with gracious mind
These blessings mediate; these deities
Installing here, mighty and hard to please.

For unto them hath Fate assign'd 890
The destinies to fix of human kind.

But whoso findeth them severe
Knows not whence come life's strokes; for crime,
Dread heritage from bygone time,
Doth lead him to these shapes of fear.
Though boasting loudly, vain his trust,
Him noiseless Ruin prostrates in the dust.

Chorus.

ANT. á.

Here may no tree-destroying mildew sweep,—

(So show I forth my grace,)

May no fierce heat within these bounds alight, 900
Blasting the tender buds; no sterile blight,

Disastrous, onward creep.

But in due season here may flocks of worth

Twin yearlings bear; and may this race,

Enrich'd with treasures of the earth,

Honour the Heaven-sent grace!

ATHENA.

Ye city-guardians do ye hear aright

What thus she promises. For great the might 910

Erinnys wields—dread brood of Night—

Alike with Hades and the Olympian Powers;—

O'er men confess'd and absolute her reign,

To some she giveth song, and some she dowers

With life, tear-blinded, marr'd by pain.

*Chorus.*STRO. β

Here may there fall no man-destroying blight !
 And ye, great Powers, o'er marriage who preside,
 In wedlock bands each lovely maid unite ;—
 Ye too, dread sisters, to ourselves allied, 920
 Awful dispensers of the Right,
 In every human home confess'd,
 In every age made manifest,
 By righteous visitations ;—aye revered,
 And, everywhere, of deities most fear'd.

ATHENA.

O'er you who ratify with friendly zeal
 Such blessings to this country, I rejoice,
 And love Persuasion's eye, who moved my voice,
 To soothe these stern refusers, passion-stung. 930
 But Zeus hath conquer'd, swayer of the tongue,
 Who o'er the mart presides. The city's weal
 Our recent strife for evermore shall seal.

*Chorus.*ANT. β .

Within this city ne'er may civil strife,
 Insatiate of ill, tumultuous roar ;
 Nor thirsty dust quaff deep the purple gore
 Of citizens ; nor, murder-rife,
 Bloody requital snatch the vengeful knife !
 But studious of the common weal
 May each to each in turn be kind, 940
 Still may they hate with single mind,
 Which among mortals many a woe can heal.

ATHENA.

At length do ye by wisdom guided, find
A tongue propitious. From these shapes of fear,
I to my lieges see rich gain. For here,
If ye these gracious ones with gracious mind
Adore and magnify,—your state and town
Ye shall for evermore with justice crown.

Chorus.

St. γ.

Farewell, farewell, enriched with wealth's fair prize,
Ye citizens, who dwell Zeus' altar near, 950
Friends to the friendly Virgin,—timely wise ;
'Neath Pallas' wings who rest, her father doth revere.

[ATHENA stations herself at the head of the Chorus in the orchestra, where they are joined by the escort of females with torches.]

ATHENA.

Ye too farewell! Mine is it first to show
Your destined seats and thitherward to lead.
Escorted by the torchlight's sacred glow,
The while in sacrifice the victims bleed 960
The downward slope descend.
Whate'er is baneful to the land restrain,
And conquest's gracious ministry upsend
To this my city. Tutelary train,
Ohildren of Cranaus, it belongs to you,
These alien-settlers to their homes to guide ;
And with my lieges may there aye abide,
Discernment rightful of the Right and True.

Chorus.

ANT. γ.

Farewell once more, my farewell I repeat, 970
 To all in Pallas' city who reside,
 Or gods or mortals. Hold in awe my seat,
 The fortunes of your life ye never then shall chide.

ATHENA.

The utt'rance of your pious vows I praise ;—
 And will escort you with the flashing light
 Of torches, to your cavernous abodes
 'Neath earth, with sacred ministers, who guard
 Mine image justly ; for, of Theseus' land,
 Now let the eye come forth,—illustrious train 980
 Of youths, of women, young or hoar with eld,
 In festive garb apparell'd, vermeil-hued,—
 Proceed and let the torch-flame lead the way,
 That, evermore, this gracious sisterhood,
 May, with events auspicious, bless this land.

[*During the following Chant the procession leaves the temple
 and descends the Acropolis.*]

Chorus of the Escort.

Night's hoary children, venerable train,
 With friendly escort leave the hallow'd fane.

ALL.

Rustics, glad shouts of triumph raise.

Chorus.

In ancient crypts remote from light,
 Victims await you and the hallow'd rite. 990

All.

People, ring out your notes of praise.

Chorus.

With promise to this land of blessings rare,
Down the steep path ye awful beings wend,
Rejoicing in the torchlight's dazzling glare.

All.

Your cries of jubilee ring out amain.

Chorus.

Let torchlights and libations close the rear.
Thus Zeus, all-seeing, and the Fates descend,
To bless these citizens to Pallas dear.

All.

Your cry of jubilee ring out amain.

NOTES.

EUMENIDES.

132. ἐπουρίσασα τῷ. This use of τῷ for αὐτῷ is undoubtedly corrupt in 166 and 337; so also, as I think, in Agam. 7. I have no index that will tell of other such passages, but I think this ought to be ἐπουρίσασά τω, *i. e.*, τινί, "some one."

155. βαρὺ τὸ περίβαρυ is clearly wrong; βαρὺ τι, περίβαρυ is just possible.

158. For θρόνον Dindorf reads θρόμβον, which has no syntax. I can believe in θρόμβω or θρόμβοις, joining φονολιβῇ to ὀμφαλόν.

166. καὶ τὸν is absurd: ἐαυτὸν gives the necessary sense; though, if ἐκλύσεται admits of being passive, no accusative would be wanted. The simplest single change is χαυτὸν for καὶ τὸν. But in place of λυπρὸς one may suspect ἀλιτρὸς, "guilty."

169. ἐκείνου is impossible. Scholefield proposed ἐξ ἐμοῦ; *qu.*, ἔκ γ' ἐμοῦ? If this may mean "after me" it is good.

337. Dindorf excellently changes ἐπὶ τὸν δ to ἐπιτόνως, and ὄνθ' ὁμοίως to ὄντα περ, ὁμως (perhaps following Hermann); and bolder still, writes νεόαιμον in place of ὑφ' αἵματος νέου. It must be admitted that the last words are a mere interpretation of some adjective whose place they have usurped; but I doubt whether ὑπὸ would be suggested by νεόαιμον, and I should look rather for an adjective which did *not* contain the word αἷμα, as νεοθηγῇ or νεοαρδῇ.

341. In ἐμαῖσι λιταῖς I suspect that ἐμοῖς ἀλίταις, "my

criminals," is hidden. We need such a phrase to make *ἔθνος* τόδε clear. The rare word *ἀλίτης* (Homeric *ἀλείτης*) would easily be mistaken.

343. *αἵματοσταγὲς* is metrically refuted, but Dindorf's innovations (here and in the strophic line also) are extreme. Leaving the strophic as we find it, *παλλεύκων δὲ πέπλων | ἄμμοιρος ἄκληρος ἐτύχθην*, we must drop out *αἵματοσταγὲς*; thereupon we find a trochaic word needful before *ἔθνος*. The lost word may have been *αἶμον* (from *αἶμων*), a rare neuter, which may have seemed to need comment. *Ζεὺς γὰρ ἀξιόμισον (αἶμον) ἔθνος τόδε λίσχας* completes the metre.

348. *σφαλερὰ* seems to be active, and *καὶ* to have been lost after it: "my limbs, which trip up *even* swift runners."

352. *κατὰ γὰν*, if *opposed* to *ὑπ' αἰθέρι*, should be *κατὰ γὰς*.

363. *ἀτίεται* is against the metre, but is far better sense than *ἀτίετα*. "*Ἄτιμ' ἀτίετα λάχη* for *ἄτιμ' ἄτιμα λάχη* is flat and unnatural. Drop *ἀτίεται* *entirely*, and the theory of a hiatus in the antistrophe drops with it.

481. *ὑπόδοσιν*, "a diminution," gives a wrong sense: *ληξὶν ἐπίδοσιν τε*, "allotment and augmentation," is what we expect; yet *ἐπίδοσιν* would not have been corrupted into *ὑπόδοσιν*. Is it not possible that *ληξίς* is the first allotment of tax, and *ὑπόδοσις*, means "*after*-payment," a second rate, when the first has proved insufficient?

492-4. *δεῖ μένειν* for *δειμαίνει* was a necessary and obvious improvement. But *εὖ* is certainly corrupt. I think that *εὖ καὶ* should be *οἴκοι*, "within," "in the heart," which makes all clear.

497. *Ἀνατρέφον*, "rearing, nursing up," is unsatisfactory in sense, and questionable in metre. As it seems to be a comment upon *ὑπὸ στένει*, I suspect that the poet wrote *ἀναστένων*, of which a first corruption was *ἀναστρέφον*.

531. *τὸν οὔποτ' αὐχούντ'*.—I think *οὔποτ'* should be *οὐκέτ'*.

602. *τὰ πλεῖστ' ἀμείνον' εὐφροσιν*.—"Ἀμεινον'" is obviously corrupt, but *εὐφροσιν* is attacked by the older editors.

βουλαῖς εὐφροσιν would give excellent sense. In ἀμείνον' we must look for some word like μελέταις or ἀμίλλαις.

ἡμποληκότα | τὰ πλείσθ' ἀμίλλαις εὐφροσιν
does not ill describe Agamemnon. But as ἡμποληκότα is a mercantile metaphor, the poet may have said ἀμοιβαῖς εὐφροσιν. In either case no line is lost, and we join δεδεγμένη δροίτη.

802. Admitting τε after κατὰ for metrical reasons, I think it hurts the sense to change γὰν to γὰς. I would punctuate it, ἐμὲ παλαιόφρονα! κατὰ τε γὰν οἰκεῖν | ἀτίετον!—φεῦ, μύσος!

THE END.

6



7-10-1-34

181003
MAY 8 1923
JUN 4 1923
JUN 11 1923
JUN 14 1923
DUE MAR - 347
DEC 24 1922
DUE MAR 1923
JUN 6 1923
DUE NOV 30 1925
DUE APR 12 1927
JAN 20 56 H

Ga 9.524

The Agamemnon, Choephoroi, and Eumen

Widener Library

002763139



3 2044 085 081 594